# THE DEVELOPMENT OF GERMAN

# SOCIAL DRAMA

# 1840-1900

by

EDWARD McINNES

Thesis presented for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy of the
University of Edinburgh in the
Faculty of Arts, July 1974.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Professor N. A. Furness for the care and patience with which he read the draft of this thesis and for his constant help and encouragement.

Parts of this study have already appeared in print. The opening chapter in the first section appeared under the title 'Strategies of Inwardness: Gutzkow's domestic Plays and the liberal Drama in the 1840's' in Maske und Kothurn, 1972, pp.219-233. The third chapter in this section was published in Orbis Litterarum, 1973, pp.46-67, under the title 'Maria Magdalena and the bürgerliches Trauerspiel'. A German version of the first chapter in the third section entitled 'Die naturalistische Dramentheorie und die dramaturgische Tradition' has appeared in Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie, 1974, pp.161-186. Some changes have been made in all of these, but they appear here substantially as printed.

## Note

In my discussion of most plays I have given page references. But when there is no standard edition of a particular work or none readily available in the British Isles, I have usually referred to it by act and scene. When discussing Naturalist plays in which acts are not generally sub-divided into scenes, I have always given page-references.

## Abstract

In the Introduction the meaning and implications of the term "social drama" are examined and the general aims of the thesis outlined. The first main section is concerned with the development of domestic drama in the 1840's. In the opening Chapter I have first looked briefly at the literary situation of the time. I have then discussed the conception of Gutzkow's domestic plays and tried to establish some basic connections between these and other polemic plays written in the years leading up to the Revolution of 1848. In the second chapter I have analysed the structure of the dramatic action in Ludwig's 'Der Erbförster' and attempted to disclose the diversity of the imaginative drives underlying its conception and to see in these evidence of the dramatist's own uncertainty about his real artistic aims. In the final part of this first section I have examined Hebbel's 'Maria Magdalena' and tried to re-assess its position in the development of the bürgerliches Trauerspiel. I have emphasised in particular the dramatist's largely intuitive concern to go beyond the available methods of dramatic realism and to embody substantially new forms of imaginative enquiry.

The second section of the thesis deals with the work of Ludwig Anzengruber. After briefly discussing his aims as a popular dramatist I have looked at his peasant plays. In these works there is, I have argued, a basic discrepancy between the playwright's propagandist purpose and the shaping tendency of his creative imagination which was still profoundly responsive to the fundamental insights of the tragic tradition. In the discussion of Anzengruber's Viennese plays in the following chapter I have again tried to show a

severe tension between his overt conciliatory aims and his extremely pessimistic vision of social existence.

The final section of the thesis is devoted to a study of Naturalism and is in four parts. In the first of these the attempts of the Naturalists to define a new form of drama are discussed. In these I have emphasised what I see as their central concern to reconcile their modern, scientifically influenced outlook with their sense of the formal identity of the drama as an aesthetic mode. In the following chapter I have looked at those Naturalist plays which sought to portray the lives of individuals bound together by their dependence upon their economic environment and have studied in particular the different ways in which the dramatists have attempted to express this determinist vision in dramatic terms.

In the next part attention is focussed on other Naturalist plays in which the individual is seen as the victim of social-cultural change yet at the same time as capable of transcending his social experience. These works, I have suggested, offer a helpful approach to the dramas of Halbe. The tense, exploratory energy of his plays stems largely (it has been argued) from our awareness of the essential ambiguity of the hero's experience of life and from our inability to relate it clearly to the dramatist's comprehensive analysis of social processes. The final chapter deals with Hauptmann's domestic tragedies. In discussing these I have stressed an apparent discontinuity between the external action and the protagonist's deepening sense of disruption and abandonment. Our responses to these works are shaped, I have claimed, by a basic uncertainty about the inward experience of the central figure and

about the character and significance of the process which eventually brings about his destruction.

In the Conclusion the main findings of the study are briefly summarised and some of the main developments in the drama in the second half of the 19th century re-assessed.

# INTRODUCTION

The term "social drama" is, I realise, rather flat and indecisive. It is after all hard to imagine a play in which the characters were not related to, or did not in some way represent, a social order beyond the confines of the immediate action. I find myself forced to adopt this rather indiscriminate term, however, in order to avoid alternatives like "domestic" or "middle-class" drama which seem to me to be much too limiting in their implications. What I have in mind in any case is something fairly restricted and specific. I am using the term social drama here to describe a kind of play which, as far as I can see, comes into being in different European countries in the 18th century and which in Germany finds its first full and relatively coherent expression in the Sturm und Drang.[1] In these works the agency of the dramatic figures is seen as decisively influenced by their involvement in the life of a particular, historically conditioned society; by their dependence upon modes of thought and feeling of which they are not fully aware and which for this reason have a profound and largely unchecked hold upon them. The action in many of the plays of Lenz, Wagner and Klinger, for example, has (as I have tried to show elsewhere) a primarily analytical function.[2] It serves to articulate tensions which arise between individuals incapable of knowing their own motives or of foreseeing the effects of their actions, and deprived of any real understanding of the people who confront them. What is new about these plays is the extent to which the individual is seen as the victim of stresses and confusions within himself and circumstances without, which are directly traceable to the pressures of corporate existence.

This creative concern with the particular, socially constrained individual is, as I see it, taken up and significantly renewed in the drama of the 1840's in Germany, and then variously extended with increasing force in the last three decades of the century. It is not possible, however, to see this as a clear, unbroken development. Looking at the period as a whole, the concern with social drama, critical and creative, appears indeed as rather fitful and fragmented. After the important initiatives of Gutzkow, Hebbel and Ludwig in the years just before the middle of the century, the social drama as a serious challenging force disappears almost completely from the German stage and it is only in the 1870's that it is taken up and creatively adapted by Anzengruber to the needs of a new generation. But it was not really until the late 1880's that the realistic social play found unchallenged critical acceptance as a vital and fully serious artistic form. The Naturalist critics were the first to work together in a concerted attempt to gain a fuller understanding of the formal character of this new mode and to establish its relations with the central traditions of German drama and dramatic theory. The Naturalist playwrights were similarly the first to devote themselves wholeheartedly and as a group to the development of the realistic drama, to extending its scope and the subtlety of its means of expression. Thus although it is not possible to speak of a continuous development of social drama throughout this period, we can none the less see in the later years its apparently sudden emergence as a culturally significant force. In the 1890's it comes to dominate the literary scene in Germany; it becomes the form which is at the very centre of critical discussion and to which the creative energies of many of the major literary figures is primarily committed.

There is one other general consideration to be made before we can go on to look at the plays themselves. If we are to understand their historical significance or indeed assess their literary value at all adequately, we must be prepared to allow this realistic form a potential range and flexibility which have often been denied it in modern criticism. Although these works are largely concerned with the investigation of specific empirical relationships and have a strong diagnostic impetus, this does not mean that they are therefore necessarily positivistic in conception. Yet this is just what many commentators have clearly assumed. Scholars with very different specialist interests like Bethel, Frye and Krook have all tended to regard the realistic social play as a form totally controlled by relativistic assumptions and wholly devoted to the observation of an actual and contingent world.[3] Some like Hampshire and Steiner have gone further, and insisted that since in a social drama the individual's destiny is seen as dependent upon specific social-historical circumstances, it inevitably appears as part of a total determinate process which we must see as coming more and more under human control. Such an outlook, Steiner characteristically insists in his 'Death of Tragedy', is totally incompatible with tragedy:

> "The tragic personage is broken by forces which can neither be fully understood nor overcome by rational prudence. Where the causes of disaster are temporal, where the conflict can be resolved through technical or social means, we can have serious drama but no tragedy."[4]

Such statements have usually gone unchallenged, I think, because they seem to distinguish between what we do feel to be two quite separate and irreconcilable frames of imaginative reference. And indeed in as far as they attempt to define the essential character of the tragic vision I find myself in general agreement with them. At the

same time, however, it seems to me that they imply a very restricted view of 19th century social drama. A statement like Steiner's, for instance, can be seen to rest upon a very confining assumption indeed. This is that in a play of this kind (he is thinking largely of Ibsen) the destiny of the individual is absolutely dependent upon the social-institutional structures of the world in which he lives and can therefore be totally transformed by any basic change in these structures.

Now it is quite true that in the plays I shall be discussing the individual's existence is seen as decisively affected by specific social attitudes and circumstances. But in many of them (often indeed in the most powerful) the imagination of the dramatist is impelled by a basic uncertainty about the character of social influence - about the complex and often unrecognised ways it impinges upon the inner life, about the kind and extent of the control it comes to exert over thought and actions. Often he is clearly concerned to ask whether a character's affective nature is not at times able to offset or modify these conditioning pressures; whether his apparent subservience to his environment may not obscure the shaping force of some instinctive energy of which he has no conscious knowledge. It is precisely this exploratory impetus which strikes me as the most distinctive quality of these plays at their best - the imaginative intensity with which they both embrace and question the comprehensive certainty of the determinist assumption.

If we can accept that the realistic social drama is not bound to a rigidly positivistic view of human existence, then we have to accept that its imaginative horizons are not necessarily as restricted as is often supposed. We must then also be prepared to consider the

possibility that it is capable (like more overtly symbolic forms) of accommodating different points of view, of utilising different kinds of statement and effect, and is (like them) able to engage the responding mind at different levels and with varying degrees of intensity. If we can accept this as a real possibility, we are in effect allowing that this may indeed be a "poetic" form, a form, that is, capable of embracing and integrating different orders of insight and, not unlike verse-drama, of releasing an awareness of significances which transcend the particularity of the immediate action.

I am anxious to press this consideration at this stage because it seems to me to have a vital bearing on our whole approach to the plays we will be discussing. Only if we are prepared to accept that this restricted and apparently mundane form may indeed be able to exploit complex expressive means which are essentially poetic in kind, will we be in a position to take seriously the claim of most of the dramatists themselves that it is not the adversary of the tragic: that in committing themselves to it they were not completely forsaking the mythic vision of tragedy and the essentially poetic mode in which it had traditionally been conceived.

In the course of our discussion we will have to examine this persisting assumption that the realistic social drama was capable of re-articulating acknowledged patterns of tragic experience and of making them available once more to the imagination of modern man. Repeatedly we will be forced to ask just what this belief in the synthesising, renewing capacities of the social drama was felt to entail and how exactly it affected the imaginative conception of particular works. These considerations must clearly be very relevant to any attempt to elucidate the historical significance of these works

and to assess their position in the development of German drama. But beyond this they are also of primary importance when we try to see them in a wider context and arrive at a more general evaluation. Their power to endure, to survive the narrow, localised world they portray, must to my mind depend largely on the degree to which they actually do succeed in embodying archetypal modes of tragic conflict and suffering and thus in confronting some perennial awareness of human dilemma.

There is just one other brief and rather apologetic comment I would like to make. As this study kept on growing in length, I found myself increasingly compelled to limit the scope of my discussion. In the first place I felt it necessary to restrict my consideration of the social-political background of the plays very severely and to refer to it generally only when it seemed directly relevant to my argument. I have felt very grateful for being able to utilise all the recent exhaustive studies of the social context of 19th century German literature by scholars like Sengle, Denkler, Hamann and Hermand, Cowen and Pascal, and I owe them a more general acknowledgment of indebtedness than my few specific references can convey.

In the same way I have felt it necessary to limit my discussion of questions of dramatic technique and theatrical effectiveness with almost equal severity. I have considered them in any detail only when they seemed to have an important bearing on my immediate concerns. None the less in this respect too I have benefited greatly from different specialist studies. I feel a considerable debt to scholars like Kindermann, Rommel, Martersteig and Fechter even though my actual discussions may not often reveal this directly.

# I The Development of domestic Drama in the 1840's

# INTRODUCTION

Writing in 1839 Herrmann Marggraff described the Thirties as years of unusual tension in which people felt trapped between a past which was irrecoverably lost and a future which was still far out of reach. It was a time, he declared, in which all hope was riddled with doubt and a passionate longing for change was offset by an uncertainty about ultimate objectives.[1] This analysis of Marggraff's seems to me to touch the nerve of this strangely dislocated and troubled age. There was a widespread feeling abroad (especially among the young) that things had changed decisively and that there could be no going back. Among the youthful liberal intellectuals this feeling was most sharply focussed in the belief that the July Revolution in France had marked a turning-point in the history of Europe and that despite the persistence of repressive, authoritarian forms of government in Germany its effects could never be undone.[2] Literature, many believed, was inescapably caught up in this great epochal crisis. A good number of commentators (especially in the younger generation) were convinced that the death of Goethe in 1832 marked the end not just of a phase of German literary history but of a whole mode of aesthetic consciousness, and that writers and critics must now attempt to explore new ways of literary development.[3] But despite the fact that this conviction was so widespread, there was as yet no clear idea of the forms which this development might take. What alone was fully accepted by all these radical critics was that the literature of the past decades could not

serve as a valid guide or norm for future developments. In their eyes indeed the essential assumptions and aims of neo-classical and romantic literature were fundamentally flawed. In both cases, as figures like Mundt, Kühne, Prutz & Alexis insisted, the imagination of the artist had been controlled by a distant, deadening aestheticism - an aestheticism which had led to an obsession with the spiritual and inward to the complete exclusion of real social concern.[4] In both cases, they claimed, artistic values were held to be independent of, indeed incompatible with, commitment to the real world of history.[5] However much they prized their literary heritage (and most of them were keen to affirm its unique, if limited, accomplishments) these young radical critics were concerned above all to show its inadequacy to the experience of an age which was overwhelmingly aware of the pressures and demands of corporate life and of the individual's involvement in the unfolding destiny of a nation.

But although this criticism of the literature of the Goethezeit was relatively clear and consistent, it did not lead to the setting up of a specific and widely accepted literary programme. However clear it was that the literature of the next decades must be more relevant, more realistic and more "democratic", there was no real agreement as to what this involved in practical terms. The causes of this general perplexity are not far to seek. In the first place there can be no doubt that commentators were profoundly disheartened by the awareness that existing censorship regulations made a direct imaginative confrontation with social experience all but impossible.[6] This was a problem peculiar to the German writer and it was widely felt to be so serious as to prevent the emergence of a kind of social realism similar to that which had developed in England and France. But this

was not all. In the course of the Thirties critics had become more and more conscious of another, more far-reaching and incalculable difficulty which made the attempt to define new literary goals still more confusing. Many of them recognised quite clearly that, even apart from all purely practical constraints, the German writer was in a position which was quite different from that of his English and French counterparts. In this country which was politically divided, torn by religious, social and regional antagonisms there was (critics repeatedly insisted) no real centre at which the life of the nation could be fully and directly observed.[7] It was repeatedly pointed out that the power of a Dickens or a Balzac to record the life of his country in this particular phase of its historical development, was inseparably bound up with his ability to observe at first hand all the determining impulses of national existence as these found their fullest, concrete expression in the metropolitan life of Paris or London.[8] The German writer, it was argued, simply had no such direct access to the essential life of his country; wherever he went, he could never escape the demoralising awareness of pettiness and fragmentation.[9]

It is in the context of this widespread doubt and confusion that we must see the great critical enthusiasm aroused by Auerbach's 'Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten' when they first appeared in 1842. These apparently slight and unpretentious works were widely felt to embody a mode of artistic concern, a quality of imaginative feeling, which was quite new in German literature and which seemed suddenly to open up possibilities of literary development which had not been clearly seen before. To many contemporary critics these works appeared to prove conclusively that a close engagement with regional life was

fully compatible with the negotiation of profound moral preoccupations, that realism could indeed be fused with psychological subtlety and deep idealist feeling - both of which were deeply characteristic of the German literary tradition.[10]

The effects of this growing concern with the Dorfgeschichte were considerable and far-reaching. Among other things it helped to give a new impetus and assurance to the slowly awakening interest in domestic drama. From the early Forties on more and more critics began to feel that the search for a new realism in the theatre might most readily find fulfilment in the development of the family play. If only on practical grounds this seemed to many the form best suited to meet the peculiar challenge of the time. In the first place, it was felt that this type of play with its apparent indifference to public, institutional existence would allow the dramatist to confront the actual, everyday world without at the same time coming into conflict with the very severe censorship regulations which governed all theatrical presentations.[11] It was also argued that a playwright working in this form would be able to draw upon the resources of a substantial, and essentially popular, tradition and would thus be in a good position to command a wide and representative audience. For in the view of many critics the significance of the tradition of domestic drama lay largely in the fact that it directly articulated a concern, a reverence, for the family and for the values of family life which informed the whole fabric of German literature and was deeply embedded in the consciousness of the German people.[12] As Laube characteristically pointed out, it was really only in the contemplation of the family and domestic life that individuals separated by barriers of class, religion and politics could feel imaginatively united with one another;

any play intent on exploring family life could therefore (he claimed) count on a degree of common interest and sympathy which would not be readily available to a work dealing with any other subject.[13] Seen from this point of view the theatrical importance of domestic drama stemmed from its power to illuminate areas of shared feeling and concern underlying all the divisive stresses of social experience which in the view of many critics had thwarted the development of a truly national drama.

The concern of these commentators to regard the family play as an intimate and essentially emotional form did not mean, however, that they saw it as devoid of all wider social significance. Indeed, paradoxical as it may seem, they were often keen to suggest that this form could be utilised as a means of a subtle, if largely indirect, social exposition. The domestic drama, although outwardly cut off from public, political life, could still, many critics believed, reflect the shaping pressures of the historical crisis in which the whole contemporary world was caught up. It could be conceived, in Hettner's telling phrase, as the hidden nerve in which the suffering of the whole social body was most sensitively registered.[14] This is not to say that in the eyes of most critics the domestic drama as they knew it, was capable of articulating this broader, and essentially modern, perception of family existence. On the contrary, many were convinced that one of the major and most demanding tasks facing the dramatist in the 1840's was that of finding the means of extending the narrow, closed framework of the family play as it had been handed down from the previous century, and of making it responsive to a new dynamic historical awareness.[15]

A good deal of thought was devoted to this central question.

Critics were driven repeatedly to ask how the family play with its single-minded concern with the familiar and the secluded could become able to accomodate this broader historical perspective.[16] Might not this attempt to enlarge its horizons (they asked) destroy its characteristic qualities of simplicity and truth to life, its unique ability to involve the imagination in a limited and minutely particularised world? Could this form really develop in this way and at the same time retain its essential imaginative identity?

Although these discussions varied greatly and often came to conflicting conclusions, it is possible to see that very many of them did rest in fact upon a widely shared, and essentially two-fold, assumption. A great number of critics were clearly convinced that domestic drama must retain (and indeed strengthen) its hold upon the recognisably real and commonplace which was the real source of its popularity; at the same time they were clearly convinced that if it were to be a fully serious artistic form, the domestic play had to become the vehicle of a comprehensive, sustaining vision of social existence.[17] Despite all the pressures of censorship, despite the limitations of popular interest, the family play, they were almost all agreed, had to become a social drama in quite a new sense.

These critical enquiries form the background of the plays we are about to study. Gutzkow, Hebbel and Ludwig, the three dramatists with whom we will be primarily concerned, all took part in these theoretical discussions and contributed significantly to them. They were all conscious in their different ways that they were working in a live tradition of domestic drama and were all intent upon extending and revitalising that tradition. They were all convinced that they could create challenging, contemporary works by exploiting basic thematic

concerns, basic patterns of relationship and crisis, clearly embodied in the family dramas which had come down from the previous century. At the same time they were all aware that this process of re-discovery and re-interpretation in which they were involved, was something new, demanding and highly controversial.

I have divided my study of the development of domestic drama in the 1840's into three parts. In the first I have discussed Gutzkow's family plays, the only works of this kind which the Young German movement produced, and have tried to establish some basic links between them and other liberal dramas written in the years before the Revolution of 1848. It will be noticeable that in the arrangement of the next two chapters I have chosen not to follow chronological development. In the first of these I have looked in some detail at Otto Ludwig's 'Der Erbförster' which was not finally completed in its present form till 1850, while in the second I have discussed Hebbel's 'Maria Magdalena' which actually appeared some six years earlier in 1844. I have thought it worth while arranging these chapters in this order so that my study of Hebbel's play can be placed at the end of this first section. This work, it seems to me, grew out of a confrontation with the tradition of the <u>bűrgerliches Trauerspiel</u> which is more profound and more far-reaching in its implications than any other in this period. It also intimates, again like no other drama of the time, imaginative possibilities which were only to be fully and consciously exploited much later in the century. It was my conviction of the supreme historical importance of this play which made me want to give it a climactic position in my discussion.

## (1) INWARDNESS AND DISSENT: GUTZKOW'S DOMESTIC PLAYS AND THE LIBERAL DRAMA

Although all the literary thinking of the Young Germans was determined by the idea of a vital renewing association between art and life, they were as a group palpably ill at ease with the world in which they lived. The dramas which they saw as the vehicles of social illumination and encouragement were for the most part works conceived in deliberate detachment from the experience of the immediate present. This paradox reveals what seems to me to be a fundamental tension in the creative consciousness of the Young Germans. The strong prophetic impulse apparent in different ways in the work of Gutzkow, Laube and Prutz, their consistent drive to invoke imaginatively the free, harmonious world which was the goal of all historical development, seems to have been in direct conflict with their theoretical commitment to the world in which their lives were actually set.[1] This intense evolutionary idealism seems to have drawn them away from contemporary German society in all its pettiness and confusion, and impelled them to explore repeatedly the great crises in their country's past development. It was here that they could illuminate most clearly the progressive movement of the German nation towards unity and freedom - a movement which would (as they consistently declared) find its inevitable fulfilment in some future age.[2]

The domestic plays of Gutzkow exist on the peripheries of these grandiose undertakings of the Young German drama. They represent a limited but coherent attempt to observe the actual experience of the ordinary individual in the contemporary world and to scrutinise his attempts to come to terms with the specific circumstances by which he

is faced. Over the years various commentators have attributed considerable historical significance to these plays. Some of the most perceptive of them, like Laube himself, Metis and, more recently, Sengle, have regarded them as some of the most successful dramas which Young Germany produced.[3] But none of these critics, as far as I can see, has really succeeded in laying bare the fierce tensions which inform their conception or in relating them to other developments in the drama in the 1840's. Too often these and other commentators have been content to take these works at their face value. To really come to grips with them, we must in my view try to look beyond the simplicity of their plots and the obviousness of their explicit message. To see the plays themselves, we must be prepared to disregard the dramatist's intentions and consider instead what his creative imagination has actually succeeded in bringing to life.

The presiding influence in these plays of Gutzkow's is not, Laube declared, Shakespeare or Schiller but Iffland.[4] But however true this judgement is, it should not lead us to underestimate the originality of Gutzkow's purpose. The dramatist was here (like many others at this time) seeking to apprehend the family situation not simply as an arena of timeless moral crises but as the focus of a specific collective situation. His aim was above all to endow the seemingly isolated crisis of personal relations with a new socially illustrative force - to explore through the diagnosis of the emotional life of unexceptional individuals the character of corporate experience. This concern to represent the tensions of the socially imprisoned mind in dramatic terms has its precedent not so much in the work of Iffland as in that of Lenz and Wagner in the Sturm und Drang. Like them Gutzkow was faced by the immense technical problem of enacting a dramatic conflict

which found no coherent expression on the plane of interpersonal relationships, of embodying areas of feeling or aspiration which remained largely disjoined from effective motive.[5] Like them he was attempting to express by dramatic means a mode of insight traditionally held to be proper only to the novel - an analytical perception of the isolated, broken self.

Yet here too the recognition of anterior influences serves only to heighten our awareness of the novelty of Gutzkow's aim. His sense of dramatic purpose was shaped by a consciousness of the depth and ambiguity of subjective experience which is essentially post-romantic in character. His directing concern was to realise a mode of drama in which the shifting motions of the distraught mind could be registered with an immediacy and fullness unknown in the works of the Sturm und Drang and anticipated perhaps only in Goethe's "intimate" plays, like 'Clavigo' and 'Stella'. It is, I believe, the consistent struggle to make the dramatic form more fully responsive to the complex evolution of inner conflict, to interiorise indeed the essential dramatic dichotomy, which is the governing impulse in Gutzkow's conception of these works.

Within the context of this aspiration towards a new dramatic inwardness "Richard Savage" (1839) must be seen as a confused but, for the dramatist, highly instructive experiment. In this work he was as yet unable to establish any sustaining connection between a strong diagnostic preoccupation and a conventional awareness of dramatic form. The attempt to enclose the dramatic dilemma within the structures of a rigid plot-development here precludes even that tentative correlation between psychological process and external event achieved in the following plays. The two aspects of the dramatic process remain

largely in divorce and become in the end mutually constricting. The antithetical scheme of collision and reversal which governs the presentation of the central relation between Savage and his mother is incapable of articulating the awareness of gradual inward growth which is at the heart of the imaginative conception of the work. Throughout the first four acts this relationship is portrayed as manifesting an apparently rigid contradiction. On the one hand, Savage appears as a being helplessly exposed to a corrupt and treacherous world by the intensity of his yearning for pure emotional attachments; on the other, Lady Macclesfield who rigidly rejects his filial claim, is seen as an individual robbed of all humane sensitivity by the force of her subjection to a depraved society.[6] In the final scene of the play, however, this understanding of the dramatic situation is suddenly overthrown. Suddenly the heroine is revealed, not as the cruel, complacent agent of a destructive world, but, like her son, as its helpless victim (V, 4 & 5). His suffering at her hand is now shown to be an extension, a reliving, of her own great suffering. This final experience of privation in which all the thwarted longing of Savage's broken life seems to find expression, is now revealed as directly dependent upon the prior emotional break-down of his mother - a break-down precipitated by the infidelity of her child's father and consummated in the growing sense of the treachery of her own mother and her closest friends.

A sense of the absolute emotional exposure of the heroine informs the final tragic statement in 'Richard Savage'. In the last scene Lady Macclesfield is apprehended as a being subjected to forces of inward disorder over which she has no moral control yet which she is able after a prolonged struggle to understand and reject. She appears

as an individual impelled to confront the mystery of her own violated self, forced to come to terms with the distortion of her potential individuality. It is in the assertion of this limited power of man to interrogate, and thus in some measure transcend, the processes of his own defilement that the tragic enactment reaches its climax. This assertion embraces (as the final words of Steele make clear) both melioristic faith and concrete indictment; it entails both the powerful affirmation of an original human goodness and the embittered condemnation of a corporate life in which innate creative energy is baulked and corrupted.

This perception of the inward estrangement of the social individual which is rhetorically expressed at the climax of this work, was to remain at the centre of Gutzkow's moral concern in his following domestic dramas. In this early play, however, it is noticeable that, despite its ultimate imaginative significance, it gains no authentic dramatic expression. Indeed, the central discrepancy in the awareness of the heroine remains in the background of immediate dramatic preoccupation. This points, I believe, to a basic formal dissociation in the drama. Within a dramatic structure conceived primarily as articulating the development of social relationships, this inward dilemma could be represented only in its external aspect, only in as far as it impinged upon the outward situation of the characters. It is dramatically portrayed as a novel, unsuspected factor which totally transforms the climactic encounter of the two main figures and forces the audience to re-assess its understanding of the whole dramatic action (V, 5). This great, secret anguish of Lady Macclesfield is not, in other words, enacted, but invoked as a theatrical agency of surprise. The evolving process of self-renewal -

the heightening tension of the mind faced by a suspicion long suppressed, the break-down of habituated feelings, the horrified recoil before a destructive truth - all of this is entailed in the one eruptive confession of the stricken woman. It is, however, communicated with the clarity of someone who has passed through turmoil and fallen into a state of knowing resignation. This suffering of the heroine's is elegiacally reported; but despite its supreme dramatic importance it is not embodied directly as a progressive inward crisis.

Gutzkow himself, it would seem, was deeply conscious of the basic formal inadequacy of 'Richard Savage'. The conception of the domestic plays which followed was marked by a consistent (although varying) concern to realise a central psychological preoccupation in terms of an evolving dramatic process, to integrate analytical insight much more fully with the tensions of a vivid dramatic fable.

In plays like 'Werner', 'Ottfried', 'Ein weisses Blatt' or 'Liesli' he was seeking above all to internalise the essential dramatic concern without at the same time forfeiting the vitality and colour of a powerful stage-spectacle. In these works the momentum of the outward action is still largely controlled by strategies of intrigue derived from the accepted conventions of domestic comedy. But this movement is not directed primarily towards the articulation of a developing plot but towards the progressive illumination of a complex psychological dilemma. Under the impact of changing circumstances the hidden confusion of the isolated individual is brought to the point of open crisis - a crisis which by its very nature precludes the possibility of concerted action or even of full subjective understanding.

The profound experience of dislocation which afflicts the protagonist in 'Werner' and 'Ottfried' is seen as arising out of a seminal feeling of social resentment. In both cases a subjective sense of self-value is at odds with the awareness of social actuality, an awareness of inner power is contradicted by the circumstances of a lowly birth.[7] The growing consciousness of this arbitrary deprivation drives both figures in the end to an embittered attempt to seize for themselves the power and freedom of aristocratic life and, after some initial success, to the total denial of their middle-class heritage. Despite considerable achievements, however, and in Werner's case full acceptance into upper-class society, neither figure is able to find the abundance of life which he had sought.[8] Both characters in their different situations are overcome by a strange sense of estrangement from the life that they had struggled to attain - a feeling which is forced into conscious recognition by a sudden overwhelming longing for the lost world of their youth. In 'Werner' it is the chance encounter of the hero with Marie, his first love, which precipitates this decisive crisis of attachments. In coming face to face with her he is forced to confront areas of experience which he has long refused to acknowledge. In her presence he feels again the singleness of his first desires and relives the purity of his youthful aspirations (II, 5; III, 5). In so doing, however, he is forced to see the stultification of his present life. Under the force of this experience he can no longer hide from himself the recognition that this position of privilege, far from stimulating that fulfilment of being for which he had yearned, has come more and more to stifle his creative energies. This life of apparent authority (as he now sees it) is not a life shaped by his own individual will; it is rather something imposed upon

him by the standards and expectations of the upper-class world which he has embraced (II, 3; IV, 1). In his deluded search for fullness of social experience he sees that he has sacrificed all freedom of action and imagination.

Self-renewal, as Werner comes to understand it, entails a harmonious integration of all those energies of feeling and imagination which have found no outlet in his captive existence (V, 7). His first aim is to free his relationship with Julie, his aristocratic wife, from the materialist pressures which have enclosed it from the beginning. A vision of this relationship, purged of compromise and illusion, becomes for him the centre of a renewed sense of life, the epitome of an existence controlled in all its aspects, domestic and professional, by a fully personal concern (IV, 7; V, 7). This, however, can never be realised in the upper-class world dominated by an alienating preoccupation with power and reputation. His commitment to the inward vision demands his return to the simplicity and freedom of the middle-class world. It is here in a life dedicated to scholarship that he seeks to reconcile his awareness of himself with that of the world in which he lives. Here his sense of personal desire can be finally unified with the experience of social duty. (V, 6 & 7).

In 'Ottfried' the hero progresses similarly from deluded ambition to self-discovery and voluntary self-limitation. Here, however, the inward confusion of the character is set in relation to a more extensive shifting experience of social reality. At the beginning of the dramatic action Gottfried already appears as an individual conscious of his inward estrangement from the values and aims of aristocratic existence yet unable to break its hold over his will

(I, 6). His first impetuous attempt to renounce this world, like his ill-considered declaration of love for Agathe, springs not from any genuine resolve but from a sentimental fantasy of himself which is without sustaining emotional energy. Beneath this spurious yearning for his familial world there lurks a deep sense of embittered impotence with which the conscious self has not come to terms. This is made unmistakably clear by his compulsive return to upper-class existence and by his sudden infatuation with Sidonie, the fiancée of his aristocratic patron (III, 6; IV, 1).

Here, as in 'Werner', the final development towards inward regeneration follows upon the initial fulfilment of an obsessive ambition. In both works the resurgent power of the moral self is revealed in the growing consciousness of social corruption and in the longing for a world free from the falseness of sophisticated desire. To Gottfried in the place of licentious refinement nature becomes a force of summons and indictment:

> "Die Luft dieses Hauses ist verpestet. Sie kann allerdings nur an den Tod erinnern! (Öffnet das Fenster) O du reiner erquickender Strom! Wie dehnt in dir sich die beengte Brust! (V, 2).

The return of Gottfried to the country parsonage at Schönlinde is portrayed as the fulfilment of his search for a sphere of life in which the ideal will can find full harmonious expression. Here the sense of enlivening personal relationships is no longer set against the awareness of an alien wider world, emotional commitment no longer separable from social responsibility (V, 8). In pursuing this vocation as a country pastor he fulfils the deepest expectations of his father and of Agathe and is united with them in the sense of a great common purpose. Moreover, it is this awareness of close personal attachments which

informs his whole vision of an existence which will be spent in a dedicated concern to succour and inspire those who are in need.[9]

The dramatic action in 'Die Schule der Reichen' also articulates a process of moral break-down and renewal. Here too the discrepancy in the consciousness of the hero is set in relation to the impelling pressures of his social experience; here too the central spiritual process is inseparably linked to a drastic change in social situation. In this play, however, the convulsive sense of alienation which is the condition of inward growth, does not (as in the works just discussed) follow upon the first assuagement of a violent ambition but upon a sudden shattering of social confidence. The self-awareness of Harry Thompson has been distorted, not, as with Gutzkow's other middle-class protagonists, by a false sense of social disadvantage, but by a presumptuous feeling of social power. The whole development of his personality, as his troubled father clearly sees, has been conditioned by the awareness of the authority embodied in the immense wealth to which he is heir (I,4; II,4). In the first two acts it is made clear that Harry, like his sister Eliza, approaches life with a claim to respect and influence, which in the society of the day are the prerogative of the nobility. The whole impetus of his existence indeed seems directed towards the realisation of a self which in private feeling and public gesture is fully consonant with the values of upper-class society (III,2).

But despite this apparently total involvement with socially established values, despite the obvious success of his efforts to gain full admittance to upper-class life, Harry's spirit is still haunted by some deep, hidden sense of failure. In the early stages of the action this remains completely beyond the range of his conscious understanding

and is revealed only in the intensity of a cynicism which masks a longing for unknown fulfilment (II,4). It is only after the illusion of invulnerability has been destroyed that this suppressed anguish erupts in an experience of total break-down. The immense shock of his father's (simulated) bankruptcy which shatters at one stroke his whole sense of personal destiny, is intensified by the horrified realisation that he has been responsible for the death of a child in a riding-accident (III,10). In this experience of guilt the shock of social abandonment is intensified to the point of existential despair.

It is at the child's grave in a state of numb distraction that he is found by a simple, kindly gardener who gives him work and shelter in the hope of saving him from ultimate hopelessness. Here in a bare existence lived in direct contact with the natural world, Harry's mind awakens to the recognition of an order of being which transcends all his earlier experience and shatters his deepest, unspoken assumptions (IV, 6). In this sense of a final involvement with the life of nature he, like Werner and Gottfried, comes to see a total contradiction between the pristine energies of man's being and the exigencies of his social existence (IV, 9). For him, as for these others, self-discovery involves a rejection of the conformist conscience. The horror with which he views a possible restoration of wealth stems from the belief that it is in materialist concern that the individual is most fully estranged from his own self and most fully enslaved to depersonalising social influences. Not only for himself but for his whole family rejection from society has been the source of a new vision: "Durch Armuth sind sie dem Himmel und der Erde wiedergewonnen" (IV, 9).

In the end, however, Harry like the heroes in the plays just discussed, comes to a conscious, willed affirmation of his inherited position. As Gottfried and Werner accept restriction and impoverish-

ment as the condition of self-renewal, so Harry takes upon himself the responsibility and peril of wealth. The situation of privilege which he had taken for granted, he now embraces in a new spirit of commitment - the spirit of one who has attained through suffering to an awareness of values beyond the social and who is bound in all his actions by a sense of ulterior obligation (V, 5). This liberation of spirit is manifest above all, in his profession of love for Jenny, the gardener's daughter. This, like his sister's engagement to Phillips, her once despised tutor, celebrates the triumph of personal emotion over socially inculcated prejudice, the release of the creative self from the bondage of habituated feelings (V, 5).

The moral development of the protagonist in these three plays is conceived essentially as a process of re-discovery and re-affirmation.[10] Here, as also in 'Richard Savage', the achievement of inward maturity is revealed in the individual's rejection of those desires which have brought the conscious will into conflict with intuitive aspiration and have thus distorted his view of his inherited social function. For it is here alone, within the sphere of received obligations, that he comes to conceive a way of life which is fully consistent with the promptings of the ideal will. This creative concern to integrate the various impulses of the inward life is seen in all cases as drawing the hero away from the rigidly ordered sphere of aristocratic existence into the narrow but freer world of middle-class activity. In this confrontation between opposing class attitudes a moral-ideological conflict is defined which is seen as basic and irreconcilable. The controlling drive of the patrician outlook, as it is portrayed in these plays, is towards the subjection of individual freedom; it is actuated by an unquestioning desire to uphold established categories of value and

purpose in the face of all purely personal striving.[11] The aim of the middle-class visionary, on the other hand, is to realise a form of existence which seeks its justification solely in the fact of its complete harmony with his subjective aspirations. This fundamental conflict of attitudes finds its effective dramatic focus in the opposing conceptions of marriage. In the collectivist ethos of the aristocracy (as it is seen here) the marital relationship has a primarily utilitarian importance: it is regarded as a contractual arrangement determined by considerations of family wealth and status and serving finally to uphold the existing structures of class power.[12] The central process of moral nurture in these three plays is presented as a direct rejection of all such corporate preoccupations. The hero's declaration of love which forms the recurrent climax of the dramatic action, testifies to an emotional encounter in which his awareness of his own identity is fulfilled in an overwhelming sense of the uniqueness of the beloved.[13] This experience is innocent of all ulterior class interest; its only sanction lies in its sheer life-enhancing intensity.

This vision of a life which is fully directed by the personal will is not, however, portrayed as empty of social concern. On the contrary, it is asserted as the only mode of being in which the creative individual can be effectively involved in corporate existence. The revitalisation of the individual and his most intimate connections, which is the immediate consequence of self-discovery, is seen as manifesting a seminal force of renewal which must increasingly extend into the life of the community at large. The release from overt social ambition, in other words, is apprehended as the precondition of a genuine, if largely hidden, participation in collective existence.

Within his narrow appointed sphere, whether it is that of the university or of business or of the Church, the hero sees himself as vitally resisting those depersonalising influences which lacerate the contemporary consciousness. His sense of his day-to-day activities is hallowed by the inward certainty that he is working towards the creation of a new society which will be upheld and inspired by a common reverence for the personal.

The reconciliation in these plays invokes an image of the regenerate life in which every impulse is harmoniously co-ordinated in a directing awareness of the ideal. The hero's sense of final social purpose, like that of his day-to-day work, is seen as stemming directly from a primary experience of his own creative selfhood; in his quotidian world he is seen as creating his own moral destiny. This assertion of a final reconciliation makes, I believe, great demands upon the responding mind and requires close critical attention. Its climactic position in the dramatic structure, like the warmth of its proclamation, clearly indicates its importance in the dramatist's scheme. Yet despite this imputed meaning it lacks real root in our immediate experience of the developing action. Far from clinching our developing impression of the dramatic world, it seems to cut across it with dislocating force. The final affirmative statement, in other words, does not seem to grow out of the concrete perception of conflict which precedes it, but to be imposed upon it as an arbitrary extraneous gloss. This sense of discrepancy has its source, I am convinced, in a severe but unacknowledged, bias of moral concern which determines the conception of the whole dramatic fable but which becomes clearly apparent in the realisation of the climax. Here it becomes clear that the purported harmony of the subjective life derives not from a full

resolution of experience but from its involuntary diminution. What is explicitly proposed as an image of spiritual integration represents in fact a restriction of awareness so severe that it precludes all conscious sense of loss. For this ending can only be presented as reconciliatory, if the state of withdrawal which it embodies, is accepted as the normative and acceptable situation of the individual - only if, that is, the very capacity to see the self in its corporate context has been completely destroyed. This, I would suggest, points to a basic imaginative tendency, the implications of which have largely escaped the dramatist's moral understanding. The conception of these plays is governed by an unwavering preoccupation with the isolated self as the sole repository of ethical value. Imaginative concern is never extended to embrace the collective as a pre-existent, independent reality which transcends all individual experience and which thus cannot be simply assessed in terms of categories derived from a personalistic morality. No, the character of social-institutional existence is elucidated only by means of a cursory analysis of the behaviour of those who hold public office. Figures like Lord Tyrconnel in 'Richard Savage', or Schönburgk in 'Ottfried' are nowhere viewed in their exercise of public authority or judged according to their professional capacities; the public figure is rather held to be adequately defined through the scrutiny of his private motives. And this points to a still deeper and equally untested assumption. The greed, hypocrisy and treachery which are revealed in the personal life of the public functionary, are proposed not merely as effective proof of the inadequacy of the individual, but of the whole system which he represents. For it is only on the basis of such a sweeping indictment that the hero's abdication from social ambition can be accorded

the full moral sanction which it clearly enjoys. Nowhere in these plays is there an attempt to view the complex problem of social authority in its public aspect as an inescapable fact of existence, with which the idealistic mind must come to terms. This brings us to what I believe is the crucial point. The creative imagination is here not engaged upon the task which the final dramatic assertions directly impute to it: that of revealing the ultimate harmony between subjective intuition and corporate consciousness. The whole impetus of the dramatist's concern is directed rather towards the advocacy of a mode of self-awareness which is essentially separate from, and alien to, collective experience.[14]

To see the severe limitation of imaginative sympathy in these plays, is to realise anew the immensity of the technical problem with which Gutzkow was faced. Despite his clear concern to internalise the essential moral interest he clearly felt impelled as a dramatist to co-relate the analysis of psychological development with effective outward movement. He was seeking, in other words, to express the progression in the withdrawn consciousness in terms of an intensifying conflict between the individual and his environment. This attempt to unify these two areas of dramatic development clearly claimed his full, conscious attention. Yet in none of these plays is analytical insight fully integrated with dramaturgical concern. The attempts in 'Werner' and 'Die Schule der Reichen' to relate a vision of the moral development of the individual with that of his declining social fortunes involves a use of devices of coincidence and intrigue which have no clear relevance to the central situation of moral dilemma. In 'Ein weisses Blatt' and, to a lesser extent, in 'Ottfried' the quest for an effective correspondence between the inner world of the hero

and his outward circumstances leads to an invocation of hidden relationships and misunderstandings which are crucial to the development of the plot but which have no necessary connection with the psychological crisis which is at the centre of imaginative concern.[15] In both cases the artistic will to present the subjective mind of the hero as the sphere of significant moral action co-exists uneasily with a dramaturgical scheme within which the hero can command very little power of effective action. This is a discrepancy which demands close attention. In this, as in their moral aspiration, these plays of Gutzkow reveal a serious tendency to imaginative fragmentation which has wide epochal importance - a tendency which can be variously observed in most of the liberal dramas of the time.

Most of the significant socially critical dramas of the 1840's were born, like these works of Gutzkow's, of a need to confront an experience of estrangement and to probe haunting yet elusive possibilities of re-integration. Here too the dramatist was manifestly at pains to relate a view of the individual as the object of impersonal forces to a vision of his underlying powers of self-renewal within one coherent dramatic process. In the plays of Freytag and the young Ludwig, in the different Volksstücke of Nestroy and Bauernfeld, as in some of the more radical works of Birch-Pfeiffer, the initial artistic concern was to define in incisive dramatic terms the awareness of a contradiction between the needs of the subjective life and the given conditions of collective existence. Here too, as in the plays of Gutzkow, the final creative impulse was to transcend an astringent diagnosis of estrangement in the evocation of a harmonious renewal of experience. Whether the immediate imaginative preoccupation is, as in Bauernfeld's 'Zwei Familien' or

Nestroy's 'Der Unbedeutende' or 'Der Schützling,' with the tribulations of the individualist conscience, or, as in Freytag's 'Die Valentine' or Ludwig's 'Die Rechte des Herzens', with the suffering of the socially imprisoned self, the dramatic action is conceived as exposing the aristocratic ethos as utterly hostile to creative aspiration.[16] This primary statement of contradiction, however, does not preclude the vision of a recovered harmony. In the tragic conception of 'Die Rechte des Herzens' the invincible powers of the inward life are revealed only in the absolute longing of the entrapped lovers (IV, 3). In almost all the other works, on the other hand, there is a consistent attempt to propose the regenerate life as a state of being within the reach of the free, impassioned will. In 'Der Schützling', or in Birch-Pfeiffer's 'Simon', as in some of Laube's "episodic" plays like 'Gottsched und Gellert' and 'Prinz Friedrich', the resolution of the conflict is brought about by the conciliatory intervention of someone in a position of high authority; in Freytag's 'Graf Waldemar' and 'Die Valentine', as in Laube's 'Die Karlsschüler' and Bauernfeld's 'Grossjährig', on the other hand, it is brought about by the willed withdrawal of the protagonist from the milieu in which he is denied fulfilment.[17]

Here, it seems to me, we can see again that crucial disparity between artistic intention and imaginative insight which is so evident in Gutzkow's plays. In these works too the will to invoke a final reconciliation seems to be in tension with the shaping impetus of the creative imagination and involves a marked shift in the character of the dramatic statement. Here too the climactic optimism seems seriously dissociated from the primary apprehension of the dramatic dilemma. For whether it is a question of the gratuitous dispensation

of an individual set in authority, or of the simple escape of the oppressed figure himself, the redemptive possibility is not seen in either case as deriving from the actual social conditions which have determined the original crisis. The liberation of the personal life thus lacks all exemplary social significance; within the given dramatic context it appears as accidental and arbitrary. It is characteristic that the alternative world which the protagonist envisages is generally seen to lie beyond the range of actual social-historical influences. Whether it is glimpsed, as in 'Die Valentine' or in 'Die Rechte des Herzens' in the pristine simplicity of the New World or, as in 'Grossjährig' and 'Graf Waldemar', in a state of unspoilt rusticity, the quest for the integrated life consistently implies a retreat from the engulfing tensions of contemporary society. This perception of a pure, unchanging world at one with the "sacred simplicities of life" is nowhere really explored or tested. It remains a dream justified by the urgency of the desire from which it springs, but without warrant in the social experience of the individual.

The conception of most of these social dramas is marked by a limitation of moral concern which (as in Gutzkow's plays) invalidates their explicit claim to relate the inward and the social. Common to these works is an engrossing preoccupation with the values of the subjective consciousness which precludes an awareness of collective life in its specific historical actuality. Perhaps only in some of the plays of Bauernfeld is there any even tentative sense of the corporate situation of the time as, in Matthew Arnold's phrase, an "appointed stage" in the evolution of society, as a state of being determined by long and complex processes of development and bearing

within itself possibilities of further growth. The whole sphere of collective, institutional existence, of political or other co-operative effort, remains almost completely beyond the scope of imaginative concern. The whole peculiar problem of social morality, of civic obligation and delegated responsibility, of the creation and maintenance of a will-in-common - all of this is characteristically ignored in these attempts to delineate the situation of the individual in the contemporary world. The artistic power of these works stems almost completely from their concern to define an awareness of the moral exile of the individual. They all articulate with a considerable, if varying, imaginative authority an epochal sense of social break-down in which, as Hazlitt had claimed some years earlier, "power and the fitness for power have altogether ceased to correspond".[18] Their diverse attempts to disclose vital possibilities of reconciliation, on the other hand, reveal a dependence of the creative mind upon conventional categories of moral and imaginative feeling which is so rigid and incongruous as to suggest a recoil from an original acknowledgement of crisis.

To read these domestic plays of Gutzkow's in conjunction with the other social dramas of the time is to become aware both of a common experience of dilemma and of a general concern to understand and negotiate this experience in terms of inherited categories of moral and aesthetic understanding. These works are clearly impelled by a will to articulate what are seen to be severe and destructive tensions but this will itself implies a confidence that these tensions can be imaginatively resolved within that framework of value which had sustained classical conceptions of the drama. The determining impulse throughout is to modify, reconnect and assimilate. It is

doubtful if any of these mid-century dramatists fully understood the nature of the tensions which they sought to reconcile. Seen from one point of view, they were variously trying to relate a sceptical perception of the self in society to a vision of personal freedom still essentially shaped by idealistic conceptions of Bildung. Looked at in another way, they were attempting to integrate a specifically modern sense of dramatic crisis with a conservative awareness of the character of the dramatic. Their aim in the last analysis was to realise a largely deterministic perception within a structure still seen as controlled by the energies of free, purposive action. It is, I believe, in the work of Gutzkow that this peculiar epochal dilemma can be most clearly observed. He, more than any other dramatist of the time (with the obvious exception of Hebbel), was haunted by a sense of the contingency of the conditioned mind and was driven to observe its complex disorders in full, immediate detail. And he more than any of his contemporaries seems to have felt the dislocating conflict between positivistic impulse and moral understanding, between analytical insight and conservative aesthetic sense, and to have struggled most arduously to confront it in critical terms. This can be most obviously seen in the unerring clarity with which he diagnosed over and over again a fundamental formal dissociation in many accepted works of the time;[19] but it is also revealed in the great intellectual tenacity with which he sought to overcome the division of dramatic purpose in his own plays. Despite this constant struggle to subordinate the conventional agencies of plot-development to the realisation of a central psychological process, he was never wholly successful in creating an organic dramatic form.[20] Even in the best of these plays, although less obviously than in many lesser works, the

evolution of the inward dilemma is only imperfectly subsumed into the motions of the external action. The examination of the conditioned mind by means of reminiscence, discussion or report conspires often to thwart outward movement, while the development of the intrigue is often, as we have seen, seriously detached from the tensions of the subjective crisis.

## (2) Otto Ludwig: 'Der Erbförster'

When 'Der Erbförster' was first produced in 1850, it was generally considered to be a work which was full of immense promise but which had not fulfilled its own implicit aims. Many commentators, among them Freytag and Auerbach, saw in it a revolutionary attempt to realise in theatrical terms the type of vivid, evocative realism which had gained such wide popularity in the contemporary Dorfgeschichte.[1] This work, they were generally agreed, revealed an imagination of unusual sensuous power, an imagination fired by a new concern to realise dramatically the quality and feel of a specific way of life. Their enthusiasm, however, did not usually go any further. Ludwig had not succeeded in the general view in creating a coherent realistic form. After an exposition which showed the power of an original, penetrating imagination, Laube and Gottschall characteristically declared, the play degenerated more and more into the melodramatic and the bizarre; the work which had begun as a realistic domestic drama ended up as a conventional horror-play.[2]

Posterity has done little to amend this view of 'Der Erbförster' as a confused, even disorganised work. But although critics have usually been quite clear about what they saw as the fatal weaknesses of the drama, they have also thought these weaknesses worth discussing and understanding.[3] They have generally assumed that the failure of 'Der Erbförster' is symptomatic of Ludwig's failure as a playwright and that this, in turn, is somehow characteristic of the widespread failure of the dramatists of the time to respond creatively to the situation in which they were placed. It seems to me that this sense of the historical importance of the play is substantially right; but I am equally convinced that we have not yet gained a full understanding

of those strange contradictions of feeling and style which almost all critics have sensed in this work. This seems to me to be a drama which is at once more ambitious and elusive than has generally been assumed.

The first two acts of 'Der Erbförster' reveal a combination of realistic insight and instinctive dramatic sense which have no obvious precedent in German drama. They show an imagination which is gripped and disciplined by the pressures of an immediate social concern and yet which is at the same time responsive to the formal values of poetic drama. No dramatist before Ludwig (with the possible exception of Lenz) had been so concerned to explore the jostling pulls and stresses which go to make up the individual's social experience, and so intent upon depicting the different relationships by which his day-to-day life is bound. Yet these opening acts are not purely discursive in character. This strong analytical impulse is fused with a shaping awareness of the mysterious, self-perpetuating power of violence - an awareness which, as Ludwig himself understood it, was common to the vision of the great tragic dramatists.[4] The close inspection of the interrelatedness of persons in society is intimately bound up with the imaginative recognition that hatred, once released, must grow and devour in ways which cannot be understood by those who set it in motion. The peculiar force of these expository sections of 'Der Erbförster' stems from the tense association of these two diverse insights. Throughout these opening acts a visionary sense of incalculable human energy permeates and quickens the process of social analysis without at the same time lessening its palpable concreteness and particularity.

Ludwig seems to see the individual in modern society as supremely

vulnerable - vulnerable in a way which he himself is unable really to understand or assess. Throughout these first two acts the dramatist's imagination seems to be haunted by a disturbing awareness that in a society in which organic relationships have largely broken down, the individual cannot know the forces which shape his life and thus cannot foresee with any certainty the effects of any new development on the existing situation, whether this is brought about by his own action or some outside event. He must live (as the dramatist sees it) in a state of partial blindness, precariously linked to his neighbours by ties which he cannot fully understand and to the life of a community which he also claims to know but which is equally beyond his comprehension.

This view of the social exposure of the individual is subtly explored in an analytical process which takes place simultaneously on two levels. On the one hand, the dramatist seeks to lay bare serious limitations and confusions in the responses of the characters who are brought seemingly against their wills, into conflict; at the same time he is concerned to show the involvement of their lives in a complex structure of relationships which are affected by, and in turn, affect, this conflict. These two aspects of the exposition are closely linked together and are finally inseparable. Taken together they serve to express a shaping sense of the dependence of the dramatic figures on a specific, socially determined situation which none of them is able to understand much less control.

The conflict between the Forester and his old friend Stein, who has just become the owner of the Düsterwald estate, is seen more and more clearly as revealing a tension between them which neither has consciously recognised. The strange, eruptive ferocity of this

dispute stems largely from the fact that each remains suspicious and afraid of the other in a way which he cannot fully grasp. From the very beginning it seems to have an ominous power to release resentments and fears which far transcend the specific issues at stake. Nominally the dispute is about a clear matter of forestry policy.[5] The collision is brought about by the fact that Ulrich, the Forester, refuses point-blank to carry out Stein's order to thin out the trees on north-facing slopes (pp.25f., 31f.). The result is deadlock, each man convinced that he is in the right. Stein insists that Ulrich, as his employee, is bound unconditionally to carry out his order. Ulrich, for his part, is equally insistent that as Forester he has a responsibility which is his alone and which places him beyond the jurisdiction even of his employer (pp.50ff.).

This refusal of Ulrich's is both completely spontaneous and unrelenting. The assurance with which he asserts his rights as Forester is not the result of any process of conscious argument or rational appraisal. It stems from an almost instinctive sense of his position. It reflects the unquestioning certainty that this position is his by right of inheritance, and that this right is acknowledged throughout the whole community. He assumes that he cannot possibly be dismissed by Stein because he has not abused the trust which has been handed down to him; this again is a fact which he knows to be universally accepted (pp.52; 57f.).

Ulrich's unyielding opposition to his employer is upheld by a series of interrelated assumptions which he himself cannot clearly distinguish or inspect. His sense of the absolute responsibility inherent in his position as Forester rests upon the assumption that he has a socially guaranteed right to fulfil it freely. This in turn

presupposes a total confidence in the stable order of the society in which he lives, a confidence indeed that it necessarily corresponds to his own private vision of a moral world. All Ulrich's experience is bound by the primary belief that the world in which he lives is governed by absolute and clearly recognised moral laws. His conduct consistently reflects the certainty that all the different aspects of his life are inseparably linked together and are all alike subject to the norms directly apprehended in his own conscience. It is typical of him that he should have no sense of any real distinction between religious and secular experience and that he should read the Bible primarily as an endorsement of moral certainties which he finds self-evident (pp.15f.; 91f.). It is equally in keeping that he should expect from his wife and children the same obedience which he demands from those who work under him in the forest (pp.35f.;53f.). Nor is it in the least surprising that he should use his own savings to increase the yield of the forest estate without ever asking himself who would ultimately benefit from this investment (pp.30; 87). For this man there can be no distinction between professional devotion and personal decency, or between a sense of loyalty to an employer and a contractual obligation. Stein's demand that he should tend the forest in a way he knows to be disastrous, forces him into a position in which his sense of duty as an employee is at odds with his awareness of professional responsibility. In resisting this order he remains true to the only moral standard which he can accept: he acts in a way which is in the interests of the forest and thus ultimately in the interests of his employer as well (p.29).

Ulrich is unable even to admit the possibility that his tenure of the position as Forester should be dependent on economic factors

alone and that the question of the value of his work should have no legal relevance (pp.31; 87). He cannot see that Stein might be entitled by law to dismiss him simply because he is the owner of the estate and thus his employer. Until the lawyer's statement is made clear to him in the fourth act, he remains completely convinced that he could only be dismissed if a charge of negligence were proved against him, - if, in other words, it could be legally shown that he was morally unworthy of holding office (p.52).

This is something that we must note carefully. Ulrich's understanding of his legal position cannot be seen as something specific or separate; it is shown to be part of his total consciousness of life. It is conditioned by his inflexible view of existence as an integrated complex of moral relationships. The law, as he sees it, is simply the formalised expression of self-evident ethical certainties which each individual accepts in his personal life:

> "Was vor dem Herzen recht ist, das muss auch vor den Gerichten recht sein" (p.58).

In his own situation, he unquestioningly assumes, it must necessarily endorse the value of his service as Forester which he knows to have been good, and thus defend him against the arbitrary, self-destructive actions of his employer. It is important to see that Ulrich's persisting failure to understand the purely contractual nature of his position as Forester does not stem from a simply intellectual deficiency as some critics have assumed.[6] What is most striking is that he is possessed by a kind of certainty which prevents him from even approaching the situation in intellectual terms. His vehement refusal to consider that he could be dismissed by an unaccountable decision on the part of his employer is determined by a deeper, largely

inarticulate refusal to see life as a series of single, unconnected relationships empty of any controlling moral significance. Given the rigidly uniform character of his view of life and the singleness of moral understanding which this entails, it is inevitable that he should understand his legal position in this way. In refusing to understand he fights with an unspoken desperation to keep a grip upon the world he knows. To admit that the categories of the law might conflict with the assertions of his own conscience would be to call in question the goodness of the social structure by which his life is bound and thus also of the universal order by which this society is sanctioned and sustained.

Stein, who confronts Ulrich in this dispute, is a man from a very different world. Although he always seems to hold the upper hand, he too is seen as a victim of his social position. He appears as a man who is thrust by the accident of wealth into a role which he has neither the inclination nor the ability to fulfil. Volatile, uncertain and crucially insensitive, he seems to lack all the qualities necessary to reconcile the demands of his new position as employer with his emotional need to retain those relationships which have become part of his day-to-day life. From the beginning he is seen to be unnerved by the consciousness that he is being observed by those who know that he is now the owner of the estate and who expect from him a show of poise and authority which he is simply unable to make (pp.25ff.).

Both the timing and the occasion of the conflict with Ulrich are unfortunate for Stein. Perhaps in other circumstances (we are led to believe) it would not have developed quite as it does. In the first place, it is made clear that Stein's confidence has already been disturbed by his son Robert's open rebellion against his authority

(pp.39ff.). This, he feels, has damaged his standing in the community. At the same time he is also thrown off balance by the realisation that this is the first time that he appears in the Ulrich household as the owner of the estate and that he must take care to set off on the right foot. The crucial argument breaks out at the party which has been arranged to celebrate the engagement of Robert to Ulrich's daughter, Marie. This is in fact the continuation of a dispute which had developed in private the day before, but now Stein is no longer able to conduct it in the same way (p.20). He cannot but be aware of the presence of Möller, his fanatically devoted secretary, who resents his association with the Forester on the grounds that it is socially compromising (p.21). At the same time, Stein is also made to feel uneasy by the presence of the cynical, contemptuous Wilkins, a wealthy farmer who is related to the Forester's wife (pp.20f.). Disconcerted by these scrutinies and increasingly alarmed by the fear of losing control of the situation, Stein's anger finally breaks forth in an outburst of unmanageable fury. He finds himself issuing an ultimatum which had been far from his intentions: either Ulrich will obey his order or he will be dismissed, and replaced by the Buchjäger, a man whom (as he well knows) the Forester regards with open contempt.

It is noticeable that even after he has had time to reflect, Stein is unable to say clearly why he acted as he did (p.38). He sees that he had never contemplated any such ultimatum and that it is not in his own interests or in those of his estate. At the same time, however, he recognises that he is not able to act just as he would like. Although he is prepared to admit in private that he has been misguided and impetuous and that the whole plan to thin out the trees was in any

case impracticable, he is clear that he cannot possibly concede this publicly (p.38).

The only course open to him, as he now sees it, is to wait and hope that someone will help Ulrich to make the first move. It is at this point that Stein learns that something unexpected has happened which complicates the situation still more. Möller informs him that in accordance with his order he has questioned Ulrich and since the latter had not relented, he, Möller, had taken it upon himself to pronounce his dismissal and to instate the Buchjäger formally as the new Forester of Düsterwald (pp.42f.). Stein seems completely dismayed by this new development; a directive which he had intended simply as a threat has in fact been put into effect against his will and better judgement. None the less he still feels unable to act. Indeed, he senses that his hands are now tied more firmly than ever. All he can do is to affirm publicly what has been done in his name, while at the same time giving Ulrich a private sign of his good-will towards him. He asks the Pastor to make clear to the Forester that although he is technically dismissed, he should regard this really as a suspension during which he can draw double his normal salary (p.44).

Stein's well-meaning search for compromise is doomed to total failure. In his attempt to ease the situation he is attributing to Ulrich a flexibility of mind which he simply does not possess. He assumes that the Forester should be able to distinguish between the positions which he is forced to take up as an employer and his real feelings as a friend, that he should sense a difference between his behaviour and his motives. Ulrich, however, is completely blind to such distinctions. Here the gulf between the two men which has been apparent throughout the dispute is most sharply revealed. Each man

is able to see the other only in his own image. Neither can make sufficient allowance for the otherness of the man whom he claims to know and like. The controlling impetus of Ulrich's outlook is to subject every experience to one uniform standard of judgement. For Stein, on the other hand, each situation has to be judged on its own terms. His whole approach to the crisis is governed by the fundamental, if unspoken, assumptions of the commercial world in which he moves. He assumes that in the last analysis everything is negotiable, that there is no conflict of interests, no grievance or misfortune, which cannot be set right by an increased cash offer. Ulrich, however, can only regard this as a perverse and treacherous attempt to undermine his sense of his own integrity, to buy him off:

> "Soll's ein Gnadengehalt sein? Ich brauche keine Gnade... Umsonst nehm' ich nichts. Ich nehme keine Almosen." (P.51).

This progressive analysis of the mutual estrangement of the two central figures goes hand in hand with the exploration of the environment in which their confrontation takes place. Both men are fully aware throughout that this is a public dispute - one in which their communal status is at stake and in which the question of the very character of social relationships is involved. What neither man is able to foresee, however, is the way in which other people (people who, in most cases, they claim to know) will become involved in, and affected by, their confrontation. The second, complementary aim of the exposition is to establish this as a conflict which has the power to ignite tensions which are largely hidden from the protagonists and which take them aback by their unexpected violence.

It is obvious from the beginning that this conflict is seriously complicated by the fact that its effects are felt at once in the

younger generation. The tensions which are only gradually revealed in the relationship between Ulrich and Stein, are immediately apparent in the opposition of their two sons, Andres and Robert. Even the realisation that the two families are soon to be related through marriage has done nothing to lessen the hostility between the two youths. What is most ominous about this hostility is the fact that both sons are so like their fathers, both in temperament and in general outlook. This is most clearly shown by the difference in the father-son relationship in the two households. Robert's constant rebellion against his father is shown to be a direct consequence of the kind of upbringing he has had. He has been brought up to see himself as a free and effective agent in a world which will accept his authority (pp.38ff.).

Andres Ulrich, on the other hand, accepts the forest as the necessary arena of his life. He accepts unquestioningly those standards which his father has taught him to observe and tends, like his father, to confront his experience in clear moral terms. This acceptance of a closed paternal world is most obvious in his readiness to subordinate himself completely to his father's authority (pp.35f.). But although he accepts the harsh demands of this inherited way of life and strives, like his father, to impose order on his life, it is clear that he has not yet learned (unlike the Forester) to control the innate turbulence of his nature. This is most evident in his relationship with the Buchjäger, this dubious, drunken misfit who has sought refuge from the world outside in the Forest. Andres' attitude to him does reveal a kind of righteous anger typical of his father, but it is an anger which threatens to become an overriding obsession. The thought that this brutal irresponsible man should have gained a new importance through Stein's purchase of the forest seems to have

destroyed his attempts at self-control, and he has allowed himself to be drawn into an open feud with the Buchjäger (p.8). At the very time when Stein assumes ownership of the forest, the time when Stein and Ulrich come into conflict, a hatred which has festered beneath the ordered surface of life suddenly breaks forth in naked violence.

Both the main figures are thus flanked by a son who is caught up in the conflict from the start and who threatens to intensify it; both also find themselves subjected to the interference of a supposed ally who intervenes unbidden in the dispute. As Stein suffers the attentions of the over-zealous Möller, so Ulrich is afflicted by the intrusion of Wilkins who has considerable influence, especially, on his wife. Both these figures are pleased to see this rift between the two old friends develop, since both in their different ways resent the idea of the forthcoming marriage and the closer relationship between the families which this will involve. Wilkens, for his part, is enraged by what he sees as Stein's arrogance and condescension towards the Forester's family (p.20f.). This feeling flows in turn from a deeper and largely inarticulate sense that Stein's acknowledged authority reflects upon, and in some ways diminishes, his own social standing. His vigorous attempts to make others believe that as his heir Marie could make a much better match, reveal a dim sense of threat for which he cannot rationally account.[7]

Möller, Stein's fanatically devoted secretary, is more simply and openly opposed to the proposed marriage. In his view the marriage of Robert should have been regarded as a strictly business transaction; it should have been used to promote Stein's commercial interests (pp.20f.). It is clear that Möller has no sense of the real self-doubt and anxiety which are the direct consequence of his employer's

business achievements. He cannot take seriously Stein's deep emotional need to cling to simple inherited patterns of life, which have no relation to his new position in society. He can see him only as the embodiment of his own restless acquisitive energy. It is to this imaginary figure that Möller's whole life is devoted. In deliberately deepening the rift between the two men he sees himself as protecting Stein's business interests and therefore as serving him in the only way that matters.[8]

The involvement of these two figures, Wilkens and Möller, in the initial dispute has the effect of widening the gulf between the two main characters. It serves to clarify and, at the same time, to release tensions latent in the social opposition between the two families. Their intervention shows pressures at work in the situation which are not apparent to the protagonists themselves but which, once openly revealed, can be seen to have been there from the beginning. The attitudes of both men are well known, they both act completely in character, yet when they act, they take the other figures by surprise.

This intervention by Möller has one direct consequence which is likewise both unexpected yet, when seen in retrospect, inevitable. While the Pastor is busy trying to bring about a conciliation, while most of the other figures are still hopeful that things will soon return to normal, the conflict suddenly enters into a new phase which takes it further out of the control of the two men directly in dispute. The Buchjäger, sensing that his authority as Forester will be short-lived, takes the first opportunity of having his revenge on Andres. Acting within his legal rights he confronts the boy at work in the forest and has him viciously manhandled as a trespasser (pp.54ff.). This marks an important point in the development of the

action. The violence which has been apparent in the different relationships but which till now has been held in check, here finally flares up in an act of open brutality. To Ulrich the news of this assault comes as a direct challenge. The order of the forest which has always been his concern has been, as he sees it, wantonly destroyed and can only be restored by a show of equally remorseless force. He gives orders to his assistant, Weiler, and to his sons that anyone carrying a gun in the forest is to be challenged and if they do not submit, summarily shot (pp.56f.).

The second act of 'Der Erbförster' ends with this threat of open armed conflict. We have seen how a dispute between two old friends has grown with disconcerting speed into a confrontation which threatens the life of the whole community. This development is determined by a complex of factors, some of which seem to be under the control of the two main figures, some of which seem totally unrelated to their desires. To what extent they must be held responsible for this development, however, remains unclear; it is not possible to say exactly how will and circumstance interact. At first sight, it is true, the conflict does seem crucially affected by forces which are not only separate from the effective desires of the protagonists but directly contrary to them. But at the same time it is clear that Ludwig has tried to destroy any sense of a simple opposition between personal will and outside influence. Indeed, much of the imaginative tension of these acts stems from a pervading impression that the expanding violence of this dispute is somehow appropriate to, and perhaps directed by, a latent destructiveness in the two adversaries which is hidden from their conscious knowledge. The dramatist has repeatedly contrived to suggest a sinister continuity between inner

compulsion and apparently accidental pressures which is not immediately obvious but which, once recognised, qualifies the whole dramatic effect. Repeatedly we are drawn to question whether these outward developments which exert such a control over the situation of the protagonists, are in fact always blindly, arbitrarily imposed upon them. For instance, the unthinking promptness with which Stein affirms what Möller has done in his name would seem to point to some assertive energy in himself which opposes his conscious intentions.[9] A similar discrepancy also seems to be apparent in Ulrich's readiness to see the Buchjäger's brutality as part of the general purposes of Stein and to reply at once with a threat of violence which he has never consciously considered. But the hiddenness of the real desires of the two main figures is most powerfully, if elusively, suggested in the involvement of their two sons. Does the vehemence of these young men, each so like his father, reveal the force of a passion which in their fathers is restrained and confused by deeper inhibitions, or does it reveal a substantially different kind of feeling? Must they be seen primarily as representatives of their families or as agents in their own right? These questions are unanswerable and the fact that they are so is, as I see it, an indication of the type of impression which Ludwig is seeking to evoke. While on one level defining a view of the characters as the victims of socially determined pressures in themselves and in their immediate relationships, he is concerned on another to convey a sense of the incalculable power of destructive passion as something which interacts with, and has some control over, extraneous influences. His aim was to convey the awareness of two co-existing fields of force, two different kinds of causal process which, although theoretically distinguishable, cannot often be

separated in actual existence.

It is important to grasp clearly the conception of the action in these first two acts of the play, because in the third there is a noticeable shift of imaginative concern. Here the dramatist sets in motion what is effectively a whole new chain of events which has only the most tenuous connections with what has gone before. The agents of this new development are two anarchists, Lindenschmied and Frei, who work (albeit confusedly and inconsistently) towards a total breakdown of social order (pp.60ff.). The only effective link between these figures and those involved in the original conflict lies in the fact that they have a consuming hatred of the Buchjäger, himself a relatively minor character in the earliest parts of the play (pp.62ff.). Although there is no sign that they know Ulrich closely, they have heard with excitement of his decision to resist his employer by force and have come to regard it as the sign of an imminent revolution. Frei seizes this opportunity to persuade Lindenschmied that this is the best possible time to have his revenge on the Buchjäger once and for all. Neither Stein nor Ulrich knows anything of this plan, neither is in any sense responsible for it.

The introduction of these figures marks a sharp break in the development of the dramatic action. It involves the intrusion of forces from beyond the sphere of close-knit relationships which seem at first to constitute the situation of crisis. What is more, these forces acquire such a significance in the subsequent development that the two protagonists, Ulrich and Stein, are displaced from the centre of the tragic conflict. From now on their role is not to initiate but to respond, to respond, that is, to events over which they have no control and of which they have not even any direct knowledge.

Now it is not in itself improbable that a harsh competitive society in which men like Möller thrive and others like Weiler and the Buchjäger are ruthlessly forced out, should produce figures like Lindenschmied and Frei, nor is it improbable that figures like this should have a vendetta against this drunken, brutalised individual who has now set himself up as the guardian of a rich man's interests. But it is the purest chance that their actions should impinge so decisively upon the life of the Forester, to whom they are tied by neither friendship nor hostility. His destiny becomes linked to theirs only through a whole series of blind accidents. It is from Ulrich's point of view a piece of simple bad luck that at the moment when Lindenschmied plans the murder, he should happen to be unarmed and at the same time in a position to steal Andres' gun (pp.66f.). For this is the basis of a complex series of misunderstandings which are to prove disastrous for the Forester. We must note these developments carefully, if we are to be able to judge the position of the hero in the final stages of the tragic action. Lindenschmied, armed with the stolen gun, does immediately succeed in tracking down and shooting the Buchjäger in a remote and gloomy ravine called the 'heimliche Grund.' However, the sound of gun-fire attracts to the scene both Andres, who has been warned by the inn-keeper, and Robert, who has come to this spot to have a secret meeting with Marie. After a chase, Lindenschmied, attempting to escape, is shot by Robert (p.73). But this is not the end of the confusion; there are two other figures present in the ravine. Möller sees part of what has happened and draws his own conclusions (pp.70ff.). Weiler similarly is attracted by the sound of gun-fire and arrives in time to see the second shooting. Overcome by horror he rushes back to tell Ulrich that he is sure that Andres has been shot by Robert. As proof that

he has not been mistaken Weiler produces a scarf which he found floating in the brook and which he is almost certain also belonged to the Forester's son (pp.100f.).

This report, based, as it seems, on direct observation and backed up by a piece of hard evidence, has a determinative effect on the dramatic development. It impinges upon Ulrich at a crucial time and in a way which seems treacherously to confirm the terrible obsession which has come to possess his mind. This evidence of his son's murder comes as the final proof that he is indeed the victim of a process of inhuman cruelty. It is visited upon a mind already reeling from an overwhelming experience of bewildered hopelessness. Immediately before Weiler's arrival Ulrich has learnt that he can make no appeal against his dismissal; that Stein's cruel and arbitrary action has behind it the full sanction of the law (pp.86ff.). The realisation that he has misunderstood the law throws into doubt all the basic certainties which have sustained Ulrich's existence. It involves a horrifying possibility from which his conscious mind recoils but which grips his intuitive imagination with a sense of numbing oppression. The world which he had confronted with such confidence and vigour, and which had seemed to accord him a rightful, honourable place suddenly becomes alien and meaningless. The news that his son has been killed thus comes as the climax of a terrible process. Its impact is decisive. It has the effect of releasing all Ulrich's confused, pent-up feelings of fear, perplexity and anger into a devouring experience of outrage; it transforms a fierce, inarticulate sense of persecution into one sole, consuming purpose of revenge.

There can, in my view, be no doubt of the crucial importance of

Weiler's report in the development of the dramatic action. It is clear that Ludwig has attempted to reveal a close binding relationship between the growing upheaval in the mind of the hero and the impact of this false report. As in the earlier parts of the action it is not possible to draw a clear line between the violence which, still half submerged, threatens to possess him and the specific effects of this horrifying report. The force and conclusiveness of the Forester's reactions reveal a mind already given over to a resentment which he himself is at a loss to understand. But even if we accept this, even if we assume an inner disturbance of very great intensity, we must still attribute to this false report a real, transforming significance. It is hard to see it as a purely accelerating or catalytic force as Ludwig himself explicitly intended. Ulrich, he claims, being the man he is, must accept the report, because it confirms what he secretly wants to believe and needs to believe.[10] Now it is simply not possible, as far as I can see, to regard Ulrich's acceptance of Weiler's report as something primarily determined by the fury of his unacknowledged search for revenge. It is not as if he creates or distorts the evidence in order to bring it into line with his own deranged desire. No, the evidence presented to him is by all normal standards of assessment coherent and plausible, and it is hard to see how in the circumstances he could have come to any other conclusion even in a more sober and detached state of mind.

This seems to me to be a point of fundamental importance. Ludwig is no longer presenting a real interplay between will and circumstance as in the first two acts of the play. The balance has shifted decisively; the odds are stacked against the Forester in quite a different way. Or, to put it in other terms, he is now presented as a victim in a radically new sense.

What is most striking about the development of the plot in Act III of 'Der Erbförster' is that it reveals a weakness, a proneness to error and confusion, in all the characters who are involved. The events in the 'heimliche Grund' are determined by such a series of coincidences and misunderstandings that not one of the individuals who are caught up in them has any real idea of the situation as a whole. Each acts in partial ignorance and in so doing helps to intensify the existing confusion. In these circumstances it is almost inevitable that Ulrich, whose own knowledge of events is dependent upon the reports of one of the deceived participants, should be misled. It is noticeable that Stein, who receives a very different report from Möller, is driven to a different but equally false conclusion (pp.77ff.). Ludwig himself does not seem to have seen the full implications of his conception of this part of the dramatic action. What he reveals here is not the specific failures of single individuals which can be registered, and in large measure explained, in terms of their dependence upon concrete social pressures, but a general liability to error which cuts across all specific differences of experience and outlook. This view of a common frailty tends here to override those carefully noted distinctions which had seemed to have a determining importance in the exposition. His sense of the individual's exposure to environmental forces seems, in other words, to have given way to a vision of a shared existential predicament.

In my view the change of atmosphere in the third act of 'Der Erbförster' reflects a basic shift in imaginative insight. The emphasis upon mystery and horror in the scenes in the 'heimliche Grund', which has always disturbed critics, flows from a largely unconscious desire to reveal a relationship between the dramatic

figures which has not been established in the expository acts. It corresponds to a vision (which Ludwig himself would not have morally endorsed) of the individual's bondage to an impenetrable and treacherous world which he cannot know but in which he must none the less act. Each figure is seen here as moving within a structure of illusion which blinds him to the reality of others' actions even though he is finally subject to them. This act, as I see it, is charged with a visionary, almost Kleistian sense of man's frailty as a rational agent, of the extreme precariousness of his attempts to know and to communicate.

From this third act onwards the dramatist adopts what is essentially a different point of view. The destiny of the Forester is no longer seen analytically, as arising directly out of a specific social situation; it is now set in a metaphysical perspective and ascribed a significance which transcends all purely discursive categories. The discrepancy in the structure of 'Der Erbförster' reveals a basic failure on the part of the dramatist to reconcile these different modes of insight. The fatal weakness of the play lies in the fact that the final catastrophe cannot be seen as the necessary consequence of the dramatic situation as this is initially established. This deluded attempt of Ulrich's to kill Robert Stein which ends up with his unwilling murder of his own daughter, does not arise directly out of his involvement with a specific social environment. He becomes a murderer only because the inner disturbance which is the result of a severe experience of social dislocation, is intensified and basically changed by this terrible error which is forced upon him. The dramatist himself would seem to have gone to some lengths to stress this fact. He makes it quite clear that even after Ulrich has learnt

that he cannot appeal against his dismissal, even after he has recognised that he must spend the rest of his life under the shadow of a terrible disgrace, he is still intent on upholding the stoic notion of honour which has governed his whole life (pp.89ff.). He continues to spurn all offers of help: "Was ich für einen Weg hab', den geht man allein" (p.96). It is possible to see this suffering ending in suicide, but it seems at this point inconceivable that this man could become a murderer. It is only the disorientating effect of his belief that Andres has been killed, which destroys his still concerted attempts to cling to the values which have sustained his whole moral existence and in so doing abandons him to a frenetic will to destroy.

This shift of imaginative interest in the latter parts of 'Der Erbförster' is fundamental and its effects can be seen in very different aspects of the play. It is evident in a marked lessening of concrete social concern in the course of the dramatic action. The questions of forestry policy and, more basically, of the nature of the relationship between employer and employee which seem in the opening acts to be of primary importance, fade almost completely from view in the last three acts. This loss of social interest is also apparent in the changing presentation of the dramatic world. The forest which is seen at first as an actual milieu in which socially determined tensions are worked out, is portrayed in the later stages of the action as a place of mystery and horror in which men struggle in blindness to their own destruction. It is abruptly stripped, in other words, of its immediate social relevance and exploited evocatively as an image of an oppressive alien world which distorts man's intentions and turns them to an end he had not conceived.

But these signs of a shifting artistic interest, however disturbing in themselves, are only symptoms of a greater contradiction, it would seem, which Ludwig was strangely unable to grasp. This writer, generally so cruelly critical of his own achievements and so concerned to explore their hidden weaknesses, appears in this case to have been somehow cut off from the workings of his own creative imagination. This failure of self-understanding is significant. Seen in conjunction with the long tortured growth of the play's conception it suggests that this is a play born of a severe inner crisis which Ludwig himself was not able to understand fully. In 'Der Erbförster', it appears, he was consciously trying to renounce some of the aims and methods essential to his earlier work and to embrace new possibilities of expression whose implications were not quite clear to him. What this new aspiration entailed can be clearly seen, if we look at the completed play alongside the earlier drafts on which Ludwig had worked intensely, if sporadically, for over five years.

The final version of 'Der Erbförster' is distinguished from its predecessors by a conscious, concerted attempt to undermine the sense of a direct, determining relation between the passion of the hero and his social experience. In these earlier drafts the protagonist's feeling of alienation from society, his misunderstanding of the violence in himself and his liability to error are all seen as inseparably connected, indeed as inter-dependent, aspects of a single state of being in which his involvement in a specific social-historical situation is constantly apparent. In some of the earlier sketches written in 1845 and 1846 the hero is brought into conflict with his overlord through his support of an acquaintance who, as he

sees it, has suffered a serious injustice.[11] Berndt, as Ulrich's predecessor was called, prides himself on the fact that the man whose cause he has taken up is not a personal friend or even a very worthy individual. He sees himself as motivated by a pure, disinterested love of justice (p.266). It soon becomes clear, however, that this passionate sense of justice is equivocal. The unthinking promptness with which he intervenes in the conflict between subject and overlord, is seen as symptomatic of a tense hostility which lurks beneath his conscious sense of idealistic purpose. This basic conception still determines later versions in which the hero's involvement in a legal conflict is no longer brought about by his awareness of another's suffering. In these, as in earlier drafts, his growing disenchantment with the law combines with a barely comprehended sense of class-antagonism to draw Berndt into league with criminal figures who seek to foment social unrest for their own ends.[12] Berndt in his obsessive concern for justice is thus seen as susceptible to the influence of those who openly oppose the rule of law. The hero, as he is portrayed here, is not an isolated individual but the representative of a class, and as such vulnerable in a way he cannot grasp. His sense of honour entails a strong feeling of group-pride and this, in turn, entails a deep-seated sense of resentment against those whom he sees as subjugating and demeaning his class. He is blind to the designs of the dissidents upon him largely because he is unconscious of the ambiguous character of his own directing passion. At the same time his final surrender to the belief that his son has been murdered is also seen in these drafts as closely linked to his pre-existent resentment of those who embody privilege and authority and who, in his view, have constantly broken faith with their

subjects.[13]

In the finally accepted version of the tragedy, as will now be clear, the passion of the hero is apprehended in a substantially different perspective. Ulrich is presented as an eccentric, self-enclosed individual whose aspirations are born in a lonely life untouched by the pressures of class-feeling and purpose. His compelling drive to assert what he sees as his inherited right now has no connection with the ambitions of the anarchists; they no longer seek to understand it or to manipulate it to their own ends. This changed view of the hero's social position reflects a basic shift in the conception of the tragic action as a whole. How Ludwig himself saw the completed work is clear from his correspondence. He saw himself as pursuing an aesthetic aim which transcended all specific social preoccupations. He was seeking to represent the confused, compulsive passion of the Forester as a shaping, self-directing energy which, despite its seeming dependence upon accidental circumstances, finally determined his destiny. The obsessive force of this search for justice was to appear as the manifestation of some inherent flaw in the self which was essentially underived and inexplicable, a tendency to imbalance which was mysteriously given in the unique make-up of his personality.[14] The pressures of his specific social situation could not in Ludwig's view be regarded as the <u>cause</u> of the hero's downfall; these were to be seen rather as the means by which his innate weakness was brought to light and fully exposed. The death of the Forester, far from implying the indictment of a particular social set-up, revealed the ultimate rationality of a just and ordered universe.

This development in Ludwig's conception of the tragic process

shows his growing involvement as a moralist and critic with what he saw as the timeless, affirmative vision of Shakespearean tragedy. This, as Ludwig understood it, was governed by a primary awareness of a rational, harmonious cosmos which was threatened only by the disruptive force of man's unreasonable passions.[15] His final revisions of 'Der Erbförster' were inspired by a concern to re-interpret the tragic development in these terms: to assert the essential autonomy of the hero's passion and in so doing to place the whole tragic action in a metaphysical perspective.

This clear theoretical preoccupation, however, seems to have lacked galvanising creative force. It did not penetrate the imaginative conception of the work in such a way as to make possible its complete re-organisation. The life of the Forester is still seen in this final version as enmeshed in specific social forces. Indeed, the analysis of environmental pressures is more extensive, detailed and subtle than in any of the earlier drafts; and although the link between the hero's passion and wider social developments is deliberately broken, his imprisonment within a specific and restricting milieu is here more compellingly established than ever before. Moreover, despite the fact that Ulrich is seen as having no connection with the outlaws, his life is still crucially affected by what they do. His fate, in other words, is still set in relation, however obliquely, to the disorders of a society beyond the forest - disorders which he seeks to ignore but which none the less further restrict his opportunities for purposive action.

In his final revision of his tragedy, Ludwig was attempting to impose a new interpretation upon a structure of action which was originally conceived in social terms. Although his theoretical aim

was to bring into being a work which was, despite its surface realism, universal and heroic, his creative imagination remained vitally and compellingly engaged in the scrutiny of concrete social processes. And strangely enough it is only in these parts of the play in which the dramatist's creative will resisted his theoretical aim and gave itself over completely to a study of specific social forces that 'Der Erbförster' comes close to achieving lasting artistic significance.

## (3) Friedrich Hebbel: 'Maria Magdalena'

Despite the sustained critical attention which Hebbel's 'Maria Magdalena' has received over the years its place in the development of German drama remains strangely ill-defined. Literary historians have certainly not been slow to claim that the play marks a turning-point in the growth of domestic tragedy and different attempts have been made to define its specific historical position.[1] Yet such assessments have seldom ventured beyond the confines of basic accepted assumptions. Perhaps here alone in the whole field of Hebbel criticism are the claims of the dramatist himself still allowed an unavowed authority over critical expectations and procedures. Even to this day the understanding of the historical significance of this work, of its relation to earlier conceptions of the bürgerliches Trauerspiel, and of its possible links with later developments in the drama, is still generally governed by Hebbel's own explicit theoretical statements. We can go no further till we qualify the dramatist's estimate of the comprehensive originality of 'Maria Magdalena', of its essential independence of earlier preoccupations in the field of social drama. Our first task must be to question that vague but widely held conviction, stated for instance by Elise Dosenheimer, that it was Hebbel who first grasped the contingency of social experience as the governing centre of tragic exploration and who in so doing introduced a new form of domestic tragedy.[2] To say this is to uphold Hebbel's own somewhat casual denigration of what has since come to be recognised as a significant development in the history of drama. It is to disregard a shaping imaginative tendency common to the experimental drama of the Sturm und Drang, and to some

other works which found wide acceptance in the theatre of the time.[3] Works like Lenz's 'Der Hofmeister' or 'Die Soldaten' or, in Hebbel's own day, Gutzkow's 'Richard Savage', were born of a like concern to diagnose the serious self-estrangement of individuals trapped in accepted prejudice and illusion. And even in plays like Wagner's 'Die Kindermörderin' or 'Kabale und Liebe' the intrusion of aristocratic power upon the middle-class world is not, as Hebbel claimed, dissociated from the analysis of the moral character of this world. It is seen rather as impinging upon characters bound by their inability to respond to another order of life and to the threat it represents.[4] Underlying the awareness of destructive social divisions in all these plays there is a recognition of a severe alienation between parent and child which has its root in a shared dependence upon communally enforced standards and desires. Here already that constriction of the conditioned mind which Hebbel seeks to define in his Foreword, is variously apprehended as a hidden, ominous source of tragic disorder.[5]

If we are to see the position of 'Maria Magdalena' in the development of the domestic drama we must fully accept this initial continuity of preoccupation. The attempts of von Wiese or Purdie to sever the conception of the work completely from the influence of the Sturm und Drang, or of May and Dosenheimer from that of the Young German drama, reveal a markedly limited interest in those plays which seem to suggest comparison with Hebbel's major work and serve in the end only to hide something of importance.[6] For the originality of the dramatist's creative purpose is to be sought less in the character of its social-psychological presuppositions than in the attempt to effect a new relationship between empirical concern and

dramatic consciousness. What distinguishes the conception of 'Maria Magdalena' from that of earlier domestic dramas is the intensity of Hebbel's quest to make the dramatic form fully responsive to deterministic insight, to create a tragic structure which was aesthetically valid because socially significant. Here, in assessing Hebbel's artistic intention, the Foreword is of unique importance. His deliberations in the important final section are determined by a truly prophetic sense of a discrepancy between the impetus of analytical insight, on the one hand, and the constraints of dramatic form as conventionally understood, on the other. Earlier attempts to apprehend the determinate life had been vitiated in his view by a consistent failure on the part of playwrights to conceive the action as necessarily grounded in the socially conditioned situation which was the essential dramatic premise.[7] The given social reality, in other words, was made amenable to dramatic presentation by imposing upon it arbitrary, complicating factors which had no clear social relevance and which therefore had the effect of distorting the nature of the character's involvement with his environment. The unsparing sharpness with which this critical insight is pursued, indicates the force of Hebbel's own artistic ambition. His aim was above all to realise an organic, analytical structure in which the energies of the dramatic form would derive solely from the environmentally controlled responses of the characters and in which therefore tragic necessity would be symbolic of actual social entrapment. The implications of this austere undertaking are immense and demand the closest critical attention. Indeed the attempt to define the place of 'Maria Magdalena' in the development of German drama is above all an attempt to elucidate and assess the artistic means by which the

dramatist sought to negotiate this artistic aim. This, however, is a much harder task than may at first appear.

Almost all Hebbel critics have acknowledged the primary success of the dramatist in translating positivistic insight into coherent dramatic process. Yet in saying this they have been by no means agreed as to the specific nature of this achievement. This is the supreme irony overshadowing the history of the critical reception of the work: that commentators who have agreed in praising the clarity of its empirical assumptions, the logic of its inward development, should have come to such opposed conclusions about its final imaginative significance. But although there is such a striking gap between the initial unanimity of critics and the disparity of their ultimate judgements, no one (to my knowledge) has recognised that a fundamental problem is involved. Divergent interpretations have been put forward and impressively sustained, but in no case have their governing presuppositions been subjected to systematic investigation.

If we examine the various critical responses to 'Maria Magdalena', it is clear that the basic disagreement has arisen in the attempt to define the nature of the relationship between exposition and evolving action, between the analysis of foregoing developments and the progressive movement in the dramatic present. To the extent that the understanding of the dramatic figures is dependent upon direct expository statements their controlling motives have generally appeared completely understandable.[8] But the more the characters - and in particular the figure of the heroine - have emerged from the sphere of diagnostic report and asserted themselves as agents in the dramatic present, the less their relationships have proved consistently susceptible of certain interpretation. This is something worth

considering. It is only in the painstaking elucidation of past actions and experiences that critics have consistently seen a complete harmony between the working of the dramatist's creative imagination and the impetus of his severe analytical purpose. But here at least they have found compelling clarity. Commentators from Vischer to Ziegler, from Rötscher to May have consistently seen the delineation of those attitudes which have drawn the dramatic figures into confrontation as fully articulating Hebbel's theoretical view of the shared bondage of imprisoned lives.[9] He has succeeded in the general consensus in revealing in the fall of Klara and in the feelings towards her of her father and fiancé, the subjection of the characters to one sole process of determination. The responses of the individual figures, which seem at first sight mutually incompatible, are shown to be impelled by a common force of subliminal constraint which effectively controls their conscious experience. In each case the apparent drive towards self-realisation (it is agreed) is successfully diagnosed as a defensive reaction to a world which seems continually to threaten the security of the individual's existence. The history of the play's critical reception shows, in short, that the tragic dilemma has been almost invariably understood in terms fully compatible with the determinist scheme outlined by Hebbel in his Foreword: as the point at which the separate lives each in its own blind constriction come into unwilled, uncomprehended conflict.[10]

But if the critical understanding of the dramatic dilemma has been strikingly uniform, the interpretations of its final resolution have differed vastly and irreconcilably. On the one hand, some commentators invoking with varying emphasis the dramatist's own

theoretical pronouncements, have regarded the evolving action in the dramatic present as the simple consummation of the determining process which has brought the crisis into being. Some of the most compelling readings of 'Maria Magdalena', like those of Tibal, Wagner and Dosenheimer, have asserted a direct continuity between the seduction of the heroine and her eventual suicide.[11] No one has put this more incisively than Ziegler:

> "Was am Ende des Dramas mit Klaras Selbstmord als Tatsache und Wirklichkeit aktuell gegeben und vollendet ist, ist mit ihrer Verführung und ihrer damit drohend beschworenen Verurteilung und Ausstossung durch die Gesellschaft potentiell, als Wesensverhalt und Möglichkeit, schon von allem Anfang an da."[12]

The conception of the drama in this view is totally expository. The development in the dramatic present is to be understood as a progressive analysis of the existent situation of entrapment - a logical revelation of the futility of the heroine's hopes of eventual escape. There is on this view no development in the essential relations of the dramatic figures; they all remain (with the partial exception of the Sekretär) the victims of unrecognised compulsions, each deprived of releasing knowledge of himself or of those to whom he is bound.

But although this interpretation soon gained an orthodox standing through its conformity with Hebbel's own explicit comments, it has never ruled unchallenged. One of the dramatist's most sympathetic early critics, Emil Kuh, and more recently two such influential scholars as Purdie and von Wiese, showed some dissatisfaction with accepted interpretations by cautiously proposing the subjective experience of the heroine as a distinctive centre of moral value.[13] In so doing they inevitably assumed that this experience was in some

way independent of environmental constraint, that it embodied a mode of awareness qualitatively different from that of the figures by whom she is surrounded. None of them, however, was prepared to assert the full implications of this assumption: to accept this view of the heroine as a basis for questioning the accepted view of the dramatic action as the unfolding of non-personal processes beyond the scope of individual control. On the contrary, they all in their various ways seem to have attempted to assimilate this potentially transforming insight into an interpretation which leaves the total deterministic framework untouched.[14] Whatever the force of this crucial perception, it did not lead to a re-assessment of the final tragic experience. This hesitancy between conflicting imaginative impressions, although characteristic of many responses to the drama, reveals a critical confusion which has not been fully acknowledged.[15] It was clearly a recognition of this that stimulated May's revolutionary attempt in 1943 to confront the issues involved and to offer a systematic re-interpretation of the work.

May's first aim was to place the figure of the heroine at the very centre of the tragic experience. To see Klara as the helpless victim of external forces was to ignore a direct impression of a vital, maturing personality. It was in his view a blatant misreading of the text to suggest that her suicide was the simple consequence of her seduction. Between the two events an immense process of inward change has taken place:

> "Klara geht aber wissend und wollend in ihren eigenen Tod. Sie entschliesst sich zum Sterben als ihrer eigenen Tat. Über den letzten Augenblick ihres armen irdischen Lebens wird mit Betonung (im Text mit Sperrdruck) gesagt, sie sei nicht hineingestürzt, sondern hineingesprungen .... Klara entflieht nicht wie ein gehetztes Wild; sie geht und bringt sich dar."[16]

The failure of the orthodox interpretation stems in May's view from an unconsidered willingness on the part of critics to accept Hebbel's own assumption of a direct continuity of motive between Anton's threat of suicide and Klara's submission to this threat. These, he claims, can in no sense be regarded as stages in one causal development; they represent, in fact, modes of aspiration and purpose which are in total contradiction and which disclose a challenging moral discrepancy at the very heart of the tragic motivation. The sacrificial death of Klara, as May sees it, far from being determined by these environmental pressures, utterly transcends the world in which she lives. It reveals a sphere of ultimate value which is foreign to the debased vision of this society and in terms of which this society is finally judged and condemned.[17]

It is hard to overestimate the historical importance of this interpretation of May's. It seemed to open up whole new possibilities of insight and evaluation. This redirective influence has recently been acknowledged by scholars like Müller and Kreuzer whose studies of various aspects of the drama have been among the most valuable in post-war criticism.[18] The liberating authority of May's reading derived, I believe, from the fact that it powerfully endorsed an intuitive sense of the innate moral significance of the tragic action which had at best been only hesitantly acknowledged in earlier interpretations. Here for the first time kinds of response which seemed incompatible with determinist presuppositions, were fully accepted and accorded a decisive place in the understanding of the work as a whole.

The achievement of May's interpretation in calling in question many of the one-sided assumptions which had governed attitudes to the

drama, is beyond dispute. Yet it does not in the last analysis resolve the fundamental critical dilemma it seeks to confront; it merely succeeds in revealing this dilemma in another, more baffling, light. The very fact that this interpretation, which so lucidly refutes the apparent logic of the positivist exegesis, should have gained such wide acceptance without really replacing more traditional readings, is in itself highly perplexing. This indeed would seem to throw into doubt the validity of existing critical strategies. It would seem to point to some imaginative depth in the dramatic statement which is responsive to opposing modes of insight but which in the end does not yield fully to either. May's reading, like those it seeks to supersede, has not, I believe, fully acknowledged those tensions which force themselves elusively, and often bewilderingly, upon the engaged imagination. Like them it does not sound the disorder of our imaginative responses but seeks to subdue them to a clear rational pattern.

This sense of a severe discrepancy between interpretative analysis and immediate experience should not be lightly dismissed. It should be accepted rather as a valid starting-point from which to probe the assumptions controlling the various types of critical investigation to which the drama has been subjected. If taken seriously it can, I think, force us to contemplate problems which are critically very relevant but which have never really been asked. It can prompt us to question the sensitivity of existing critical methods to the specific form in which the dramatic vision is expressed in 'Maria Magdalena'. It can impel us to assess their relative capacities to respond to the imaginative medium in which the tragic process is embodied, to evaluate the effects and possibilities peculiar to this dramatic mode. The question which must direct our investigation must be this: to

what extent are these different critical approaches capable of sounding the implications inherent in Hebbel's use of the analytical form - in his quest for a new quality of dramatic realism?

When looked at from this point of view many of the confrontations of critics with this uniquely challenging play seem strangely rigid and insensitive. Their various approaches to 'Maria Magdalena' have been largely governed by assumptions concerning Hebbel's work as a whole. Their awareness of the specific imaginative character of this drama has been largely annulled by an employment of techniques which have been evolved in the study of his other plays; the need for a decisive shift of imaginative stance and method has been generally overlooked. Nowhere is this rigidity of approach more obvious than in the severely deterministic interpretations of commentators like Tibal, Ziegler and Dosenheimber. Here the force of an abstractive concern is so powerful as to consistently suppress a consciousness of the unique formal structure of the drama.

This is particularly evident in their discussion of the figure of the heroine. None of these scholars allows sufficiently for the fact that the dramatic analysis of Klara's subjective consciousness is necessarily dependent upon her own ability to comprehend and interpret her own evolving experience.[19] In their concern to dissect her self-awareness as the object of converging social influences, they have consistently tended to ignore the crucial fact that it is she herself as discriminating subject who gives us fullest access to this inward world. It is above all through her own unsparing self-diagnosis that the circumstances of her seduction are dramatically revealed and, more importantly, morally evaluated. First in her opening conversation with Leonhard (pp.17ff.) and then in her extensive confession to

Friedrich (pp.46ff.) Klara shows that she has come through suffering to a new understanding of her own inner frailty - an understanding so clear and so free of self-indulgence as to disclose a significant development in her moral consciousness. The live, maturing personality who sits in judgement on past failure cannot be simply identified with the being who incurred that failure. There is in this figure some principle of growth which cannot be accommodated to a radically positivistic assessment. This character - and of this there can be no doubt - imposes itself upon us as one that has achieved some measure of freedom from the constraints in which it had been blindly caught up, as one that is in some sense renewed.

But here we must proceed with caution. Here again we must pay due attention to a characteristic tension between the overt significance of specific statements and the implications of their dramatic context. We cannot (as May's exposition constantly presupposes) have a full, indubitable knowledge of the change which takes place in the heroine. All we can surely know is the way in which this change impresses itself on her tortured, questing consciousness. There is no doubt that Klara herself in her concern to avert the danger which threatens her father sees her whole life as finally released from the pressures of communally accepted attitudes. In her awareness of her father's suffering she acknowledges a sense of ultimate purpose which is completely new in her life and which annuls all uncertainty or self-concern. All her thinking, in anguish, in hope or in total renunciation, is controlled by a sole awareness of the suffering which threatens her father (pp.42f.; 52f.; 56f.; 66f.). In this she acknowledges an imperative which annuls all worldly consideration. In her final confrontation with Leonhard she declares this sense of

the freedom of her purpose from the pressures of communal expectation:

> "Wär's um mich allein - ich wollt's ja tragen, ich wollt's geduldig hinnehmen als verdiente Strafe für, ich weiss nicht was, wenn die Welt mich in meinem Elend mit Füssen träte ..."(p.56).

The conscious mind of Klara - and this much is certain - is fired by a sense of sacrificial aim which is impatient of all social sanction. In acknowledging this ultimate command she sees herself as rejecting all relative ties and responsibilities. Faced by this absolute claim upon her even her own life and that of her unborn child lose their importance:

> "Aber ich bin's nicht allein und leichter find' ich am jüngsten Tag noch eine Antwort auf des Richters Frage: Warum hast Du Dich selbst umgebracht? als auf die: Warum hast Du Deinen Vater so weit getrieben?" (p.56).

The recognition of the depth and singleness of Klara's will to self-immolation necessarily permeates and conditions our whole response to the drama. At times the force of this impression is indeed such that it seems to guarantee the sense of a value which is completely independent of the barren world in which the drama comes into being. But it is characteristic of the artistic character of 'Maria Magdalena' that this feeling of unmixed acknowledgement cannot persist for long - that it is recurrently beset by a confusing doubt. Our awareness of the consuming force of the heroine's design co-exists with our basic uncertainty about the capacity of her mind to come to terms with the immensity of this inward change which has come upon her. In acknowledging the finality of her purpose we are forced to recognise the frailty and restriction of the mind which is its only register. To regard Klara's subjective self-understanding (like

May) as the source of a final imaginative certainty in terms of which the value of conflicting suggestions can be assessed, is to separate it from the dramatic framework in which alone it acquires artistic meaning. No, the apprehension of the inward development of the heroine, however great its momentary power over our responses, is encompassed throughout by a qualifying awareness of her continuing (if indefinable) susceptibility to the pressures of this destructive milieu.

This ambiguity is inescapably given in the character of the dramatic language. Whatever the reality of Klara's experience of regeneration, it can only be understood and endorsed by her reflective mind in terms of categories and images which have shaped her spiritual development from infancy. Her experience of an inward freedom from society thus necessarily finds expression in formulae which reveal some degree of continuing dependence upon it. This brings us to the very heart of the problem of interpretation. In her experience of ultimate dilemma those religious certainties which have governed her growing awareness of life, clearly acquire for Klara a new, transforming significance; but they none the less still entail those values and invoke those sanctions which she has been taught from the first to observe. They still, that is, uphold the same world-view through which her unquestioning sense of her own subservience has been socially enforced. The heroine's will to total self-surrender thus appears as essentially opaque. The awareness of purpose in which it issues, may be seen as arising out of a total dependence upon socially imposed constraints or it may be seen as the consequence of a supremely free commitment of the moral self. Between these alternatives, the death accepted in defeat and that

embraced in the sense of a final responsibility, there is clearly an absolute ethical distinction and upon this the interpretation of the tragedy will in the end largely depend. Yet in the outward behaviour of Klara before her suicide there is no conclusive revelation of the will from which it derives, no binding disclosure of the motive by which alone its moral character can be determined. The sacrificial impulse which from one point of view seems to deny all links with this narrow world, seems from another to be enclosed by all manner of equivocal parallels. For this act of self-immolation, whatever its inward character, is born in response to the same religious vision which upholds the fearful life-denying asceticism of her parents. In what sense then can it be called unique? Is it merely to be seen as a climactic revelation of a compulsive, binding subservience to a religion which rejects the values of life and aspires only to a fulfilment in the world beyond? Does the impetus of her sacrificial desire stem in fact from an unavowed desire to be delivered from an alien, meaningless world? Or does this directing sense of purpose reveal, as we are impelled at times to believe, an energy of will utterly opposed to the sterile resignation of her parents and the assertive egotism of the younger generation? To these decisive questions we are driven again and again to return; but we can have no conclusive answer. The act of Klara which seems at one moment to contradict the whole corrupting bias of life in this community, seems at others to have its roots in this life so deeply overshadowed by the pervasive reality of death.[20]

What does at least seem certain, however, is that it is here alone in the apprehension of the heroine, that we are assailed by such fundamental doubt. While the religious outlook of Anton and his wife, like the secular aspirations of Karl and Leonhard, appears as

fully explicable in terms of environmental dependence, the experience of Klara seems to resist any such reductive definition. It seems at times to be inaccessible to discursive explanations; at others we seem able to understand it like the behaviour of these other figures, in determinist terms. It is, I believe, in this tense, suggestive counterpointing of imaginative impressions that Hebbel moves most significantly beyond the established methods of the mid-century domestic drama and explores new possibilities of dramatic evocation. This can be seen if we compare the conception of the figure of Klara with that of figures in other works to whom she bears a clear outward resemblance. The reactions of the heroine in Lenz's 'Der Hofmeister' or Wagner's 'Die Kindermörderin', in Raupach's 'Der Müller und sein Kind' or Gutzkow's 'Liesli' remain throughout consistently understandable within the terms of a controlling positivistic assumption.[21] In all these works a progressive enquiry into the nature of the conditioned consciousness finds its fulfilment in a diagnosis of psychic disintegration. Here the revelation of the inward exposure of the heroine reaches its climax in the enactment of a catastrophe whose moral-social implications are obvious and emphatic. Such clarity of procedure and effect is quite alien to 'Maria Magdalena'. Although the initial analysis of the inward weakness of the heroine is in some ways strikingly similar to that in these other plays, it issues not in the manifestation of a clear inward disorder but in the disclosure of an apparently coherent moral experience in which all her energies seem heightened and transformed. Here alone the awareness of crisis does not lead to a paralysis of the will but to its seeming regeneration.

This disorientating uncertainty about the hidden reality of the

heroine's death is matched, moreover, by a similar doubt about its final social significance. The only thing which is indisputably obvious is that it does not fulfil its explicit saving purpose. The fact that her will to die has been observed and made public, means that Klara's death cannot protect her father from disgrace; it can only expose him to a greater, more threatening ignominy. Nor is it as if this revelation of her desperate intention makes it possible for her death to influence her father's life in an unforeseen but genuinely creative way. Her sacrifice does not release the springs of his deepest suppressed feelings, it does not awaken any sense of anguished responsibility and failure. It contrives only to heighten that compulsive drive to self-vindication which has increasingly isolated Anton from all around and warped his deepest emotional capacities.[22]

But this obvious failure of Klara's death to fulfil its immediate objective, some have claimed, is more than offset by its wider creative impact on the life of the younger generation. In the self-indictment of Friedrich and in his ensuing condemnation of Anton (it is said) the hidden power of her act to inspire a more sensitive, personal mode of moral awareness is symbolically announced.[23] Yet despite the dramatist's clear concern to endow this regenerate insight of Friedrich's with a high representative significance, the manner of its artistic embodiment is such as to preclude any simple sense of its direct social effectiveness. For this renewal of spirit is consummated on the very edges of the tragic action, in the contemplation of disaster (pp.69ff.). It is born of the crushing awareness that he has failed to save the life of Klara and that this life, like his own, is spent in vain. The imaginative authority of this insight

is thus inevitably qualified by the irony of its situation in the total dramatic development. The fact that this growth of understanding takes place under such abnormal pressures and so far from the conditions of average social experience, that it is impelled by a sense of despairing futility - this all seems calculated to undermine the certainty of its effective impact upon the life of society at large and thus inevitably to throw the hope of corporate renewal into doubt.

Nor can the figure of Karl be seen to fulfil a clear symbolic function.[24] Here again there is a telling discrepancy between the apparent simplicity of Hebbel's theoretical concern and the complex workings of his creative imagination. We are unable to assess the impact of Klara's death upon her brother's life because we can have no final certainty about the innermost potentialities of his character as such. Are we to see this death as helping to free him from a destructiveness which has its sole roots in his adverse experience of life or as ultimately confirming a tendency to brutality which is inherent in his essential nature? It may well be that this disaster will strengthen his determination to create a new life in freedom and that he will, as he has claimed, return one day in triumph (pp.65f.). But it is equally possible that his understanding of the events leading up to his sister's suicide will only heighten his desire to murder the man who in wrongfully arresting him, helped to precipitate this unexpected horror (p.63). His eventual return may indeed reveal the triumphant renewal of his family's existence; but it may equally well mark its final disintegration.

But the uncertainty does not end here. Even if the creative suggestion embodied in these two figures is fully accepted, the nature

of its final influence upon the life of society remains profoundly in doubt. For our awareness of this potential effect is contained within a wider recognition of the innate tendency of existence in this community to resist change. Whatever the power of this influence, how can its impact be measured against the force of those pressures which bind the individual mind to the authority of the collective? These questions are forced inescapably upon us by the fact that the only unquestionable triumph in this catastrophe is that of the vigilant, judging community. The fact that Klara's act of self-destruction is seen, seems to reveal yet again the final obeisance of individual initiative to collective constraint. It seems to emphasise with a harsh, climactic irony the subjection of personal aspirations to established modes of evaluation - the assimilation of the exceptional and potentially creative event to the compelling force of a corporate will which ruthlessly enforces one single standard and so suppresses all impetus of growth. How is this implication of sterility so closely associated with the central dramatic analysis, to be related to the conflicting suggestion of development? Can such evocative intimations claim some imaginative priority over our sense of empirical probabilities? Or must all references to another order of significance be strictly subordinated to the authority of discursive methods of explanation? This is a question which we are forced to confront but to which we can find no certain answer. It involves a conflict between different modes of imaginative assertion which both have their basis in the given structures of the dramatic statement but which imply totally contradictory possibilities of final understanding.

To apprehend the tragic action in 'Maria Magdalena' is to remain fundamentally and consistently open to discordant tendencies of

imaginative insight. The attempt to resolve this tension, I have suggested, involves a disregard of some aspect of the densely organised fabric of colliding suggestions. The dramatic statement is, as I see it, inherently ambivalent. I am aware that this judgement goes against the consensus of critical opinion which, albeit in very different ways, has attributed to the work a full cathartic effect in the classical sense. It is my belief, however, that we are here denied all final experience of tragic resolution; that we can gain no certain knowledge of the moral character and effect of the central dramatic development and thus about the world in which the action is set. The culminating impression is not that of harmonious certainty but of disconcerting enigma; contradictory indications are not finally subsumed in one cohering perception but remain in sharp, abrasive discordance. The spectacle of Klara's death plunges us, in fact, into the contemplation of a dilemma of the deepest moral significance. Is this death to be seen as vindicating man's hidden capacities for self-renewal which precede and finally transcend his subjection to environmental influence? or as revealing a bondage of spirit so severe that it destroys the very possibility of rational self-understanding? Does the catastrophe intimate the power of the purified vision to penetrate collective life or does it merely demonstrate the final subservience of the spiritual to non-personal process? To be true to our direct experience we must, I believe, confront and hold in suspension these contradictory possibilities; we must respond to a mode of understanding which is enforced and authorised by analytical methods, while at the same time admitting an ulterior suggestion of creative forces in human life which elude empirical definition. The drama, it seems to me, sets in tension two

irreconcilable estimates of man's stature as a moral being and of his position in the world in which he lives. It advances two opposed possibilities of dramatic causation, which in turn entail two contradictory systems of value. But it offers no final synthesis. There is here no tendency of imaginative affirmation which is not beset by alienating doubt, no feeling of detached scepticism which is not challenged by the will to sympathetic engagement.

'Maria Magdalena' cannot therefore, in my view, be accommodated to neo-classical definitions of the tragic. It must be seen rather as a work of tragic exploration in a peculiarly modern sense - as a sounding of incongruous possibilities of tragic feeling. The seminal tragic intuition which Hebbel was seeking to negotiate seems to have been outlined in those laconic but impenetrable words in his diary: "Durch Dulden Tun: Idee des Weibes."[25] This vision of the mysterious creative force of self-forgetting endurance clearly embraced a whole range of intuitions and insights - emotional, moral, intellectual - which were so severely dissociated that they could not be fully confronted in ratiocinative terms. The ability to embody this inward tension in coherent imaginative terms represents a decisive stage in Hebbel's artistic development.[26] It was above all an achievement of artistic comprehension, of a complex co-relating of divergent orders of imaginative sensibility. At one level this preoccupation entailed an engagement with an awareness of historical process, of severe tensions in contemporary social existence, which seemed to demand elucidation by discursive means; at another it inspired a creative confrontation with impulses which were not fully accessible to conscious understanding: with profound mythic suggestions which could only be expressed in opposition to the determining impetus of analytical insight.[27] It is

this collision of imaginative insights which, I believe, finds intense poetic embodiment in 'Maria Magdalena'. In pursuing a pragmatic investigation of the causes of Klara's seduction and death the dramatist, it would seem, was driven to question and consciously reject an archetypal tragic image of redemptive suffering; so great was the authority of the tragic archetype over his creative consciousness, however, that it seems to have dislocated the comprehensive certainty of his expository intention. The peculiarly elusive effect of the drama stems from the fact that it touches the springs of mythic association while ostensibly exploiting the reductive means of positivistic analysis, and that in the end it validates neither frame of imaginative reference. The source of the play's creative life is to be sought finally, I believe, in the strength of its inner organisation - in the power with which the balance of conflicting suggestions is enforced and contained within one unified artistic structure.

If we can accept that the dramatic statement in 'Maria Magdalena' is, as I have claimed, essentially exploratory, then its position in the development of the German drama must be reconsidered. No other drama of the time was born of such a radical, if largely unconscious, impulse to realise imaginative effects which were completely at odds with accepted notions of the function and potentiality of the drama. The concern to investigate the conditioned consciousness in mid-century plays did give rise to widespread and often far-reaching technical experimentation but this was generally controlled by a deep-lying and unquestioned sense of the drama as an autonomous, self-sufficient form. The conception of the domestic dramas of Gutzkow and Freytag, for instance, can be seen to have been governed by a basic concern to

assimilate a strong relativising drive towards social analysis to an ultimate reconciling vision of experience. In plays like 'Werner' or 'Die Valentine' a process of enquiry is increasingly subordinated to the pressures of a final interpretative insight. The individual assertions of the dramatic figures are here persistently (although with varying degrees of explicitness) 'placed' and evaluated through their relation to a controlling perception of a transcendent and unquestionable body of truth.

This drive to accommodate the analytical is most obtrusively apparent in a conventional and often incongruous use of choric figures who are seen as independent of the confining pressures of the dramatic world, as enunciating standards of moral value in terms of which this world can be judged.[28] The same impulse is also, although less conspicuously, evident in a regulative or 'epic' use of theatrical devices like aside and stage-direction. This is very noticeable in a work like 'Der Erbförster' in which the diagnostic impetus of the dramatist's imagination is particularly strong. Here the stage-direction in particular acquires a decisive importance as the means of conveying an authoritative insight into areas of the hero's affective existence which elude his conscious insight and find expression only in involuntary physical reactions. Although this technique clearly stems in part from a sensitive, realistic concern to acknowledge the limitations of personal self-knowledge and articulateness, it can be seen in the end to subserve an ulterior dramatic need to assert a final moral-psychological evaluation of character by means of which its universal destiny can be understood.[29] In 'Der Erbförster', as in so many plays of the time, a profound crisis in dramatic apprehension is manifest in the confused attempt to relate the interrogatory impetus

of analytical insight to an inherited conception of the drama as a symbolic form in which an absolute vision of life is expressed. In 'Maria Magdalena', it seems to me, Hebbel moves beyond this epochal dichotomy. Here the processes of exploration are not accommodated to an ultimate, harmonising interpretation. Here there is no figure whose vision indubitably transcends the enclosing constriction. Here the stage-direction which reveals discontinuities in the subjective awareness of the character does not offer corrective elucidations which interpret the dramatic situation for us and thus free us from uncertainty; it serves rather to reinforce our fundamental doubts about the capacity of the individual to come to terms with his own radically fragmented experience.

In developing this so-called 'retrospective method' as an instrument of social investigation Hebbel went further than he or his contemporaries realised. He was taking the drama, I believe, into a decisive new phase of development, the implications of which could not be foreseen. In this analytical form the artistic statement was dependent to an unprecedented degree upon the powers of the isolated individual to recall and interpret experience. It entailed, however, not only an awareness of the mutual disconnection of the single figures but also of a severe dissociation within the consciousness of the experiencing subject itself, of a radical divorce between the questing intelligence and the determining energies of the affective life. In interiorising the essential dramatic process Hebbel was thus placing it largely beyond the scope of inter-personal discussion; he was locating it in a sphere of subjective awareness only partially accessible to the introspective mind and almost completely out of reach of authoritative outside comment. In this new realistic form

ambiguity is not an accidental consequence but an essential condition of imaginative experience.[30]

If we can see 'Maria Magdalena' from this point of view, there are, it seems to me, possibilities of finding new links between the impetus of Hebbel's creative vision and that of Büchner and Grabbe - possibilities which have been obscured by the undue dependence of critics upon a sense of rigid opposition between 'closed' and 'open' drama.[31] It would also seem to necessitate another look at the relations between 'Maria Magdalena' and the work of Ibsen. If we do accept the strong relativistic impulse of Hebbel's dramatic conception, then we must probe possible connections between this and the conception not primarily of the earlier polemic dramas which has generally been stressed, but of the later, more elusive works like 'The Wild Duck' and 'Hedda Gabbler'. But this new assessment of Hebbel's play would seem to me above all to open up possibilities of revealing a hidden continuity between mid-century drama and that of Naturalism, and in particular of Hauptmann's work. This is something to which we will have to attend closely in our study of the Naturalist drama.

## Conclusion

All the plays discussed in this section embody in their different ways a world in which standards, attitudes and relationships are in process of change. Many of them show that the dramatist has reflected deeply on the position of the individual in contemporary society and has attempted to confront in imaginative terms an awareness of profound intellectual dilemma.

In many of the liberal plays studied in the first chapter it is apparent that this process of imaginative confrontation has been controlled and in some ways seriously impeded by a strong polemic concern. In works like Freytag's 'Graf Waldemar' or Nestroy's 'Der Unbedeutende', for instance, the force of the dramatist's social analysis is greatly weakened by his urgent desire to indict what he sees as the corrupting tendencies of upper-class life. Even in Gutzkow's plays in which the exploration of infra-personal tensions is much more subtle and far-reaching, the range of the dramatist's preoccupations is limited, the balance of his sympathies disturbed, by the pressures of his propagandist aim. Indeed, the force of his desire to safeguard liberal ideals is so intense that it consistently frustrates his theoretical concern to see contemporary society historically and as a whole. The lack of real dramatic intensity in almost all these plays betrays a general failure of real imaginative energy on the part of these engaged playwrights: a failure to interrogate imaginatively their impelling convictions about the nature of contemporary social experience and of its relations to the individual's deepest impulses and aspirations.

When we come to 'Der Erbförster' and 'Maria Magdalena', on the

other hand, we have to do with works of genuine artistic force. However we see these plays, however we measure the great differences between them, we are bound to regard them as the fruit of intense imaginative enquiries - enquiries powerful enough in each case to resist and, to some extent, transform the constraint of the dramatist's clear theoretical intentions.

Ludwig, I have suggested, was unable finally to resolve the deep-set and largely unsounded tensions in his creative consciousness. Nonetheless parts of 'Der Erbförster' are very finely wrought indeed. The real dramatic power, apparent especially in the opening acts, stems from a rare fusion of specific social insight with a more general awareness of the potential disorder which lurks beneath the surface of apparently stable and disciplined lives. What disturbs this tense interplay of suggestions (as I see it) is the intrusion of a fatalistic sense of man's liability to accident and error which has no real root in the dramatist's social concern or in his apprehension of inward conflict. The structural incoherence in 'Der Erbförster' reflects the failure of the dramatist to encompass and reconcile these differing tendencies of perception. The synthesis of social feeling and traditional tragic insight, promisingly realised in the first two acts, is disrupted by a shaping sense of the existential exposure of all the dramatic figures which Ludwig was simply unable to relate effectively to the initial impetus of his creative imagination.

The peculiar artistic power of 'Maria Magdalena', as I see it, stems from the fact that the dramatist has succeeded in embracing imaginatively different points of view, in holding in tension different kinds of insight. The drama embodies two irreconcilable estimates of the heroine's destiny and in so doing proposes two

conflicting views of the world in which the play is set. Hebbel, I have claimed, has developed the analytical form as a means of correlating contradictory modes of perception and assessment.

In the first place the retrospective form seems designed to show the power of the past over the present, to demonstrate the heroine's complete loss of control over her own fate. The situation in which she is now imprisoned has been brought into being by one crucial action on her part which she can never undo; her fate is now in the hands of others - of Leonhard, her father and Friedrich - over whom she has manifestly no control. From this point of view her suffering appears as something inescapably imposed upon her which she must accept in complete passivity.

But Hebbel, I have suggested, has not used this analytical method solely as a means of revealing the unalterable development of the situation in which the heroine is trapped. He has also exploited it (largely unconsciously) as a means of directing attention towards her inward consciousness; of revealing this as a realm which she herself cannot fully penetrate and which is almost completely beyond the reach of the other figures. By placing at the very centre of dramatic concern this individual who alone can fully survey and relive the different events which have led to her entrapment he is able to explore from within this experience of apparently helpless suffering. This girl who is driven to reflect so intensely upon the causes and implications of her failure, is in some way (we must believe) more mature, more sensitive than the girl who failed. Her ability to respond to suffering, to understand increasingly and accept, reveals some power to grow which undermines our sense of her complete passivity. Neither she nor any of the other figures, however,

can define what kind of power this is, or show to what extent it is able to grasp and transform her will. Klara, as we actually see her, is a victim of her circumstances and yet in some way outside them; her suffering is imposed upon her and yet in some way accepted and transformed.

It is above all the challenging duality of Hebbel's vision which seems to me to be of such great historical importance. His use of the analytical method as a means of defining the ineluctable development of circumstances, and at the same time of evoking the depth and impenetrability of subjective experience - this substantially anticipates those highly sophisticated techniques of Ibsen which seemed to German critics and playwrights later in the century to open up whole new territories to the drama.

## II. Ludwig Anzengruber and the Viennese popular Theatre

## Introduction

> "Der saturierte Fortschrittsoptimismus der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft, die Auffassung des Theaters als Bildungs-und Unterhaltungsinstitut haben eine Entwicklung des sozialen Dramas auf dem von Hebbel gewiesenen, von Hettner geforderten Wege bis zum Naturalismus verhindert."

Even commentators who might not have accepted the full implications of this analysis of Martini's, would have completely agreed with him that no significant social dramas were written in Germany in the years between 1850 and the advent of Naturalism more than thirty years later.[1] Even contemporary critics were for the most part aware that this period of momentous social and political change through which they were living, had found no real echo in the German theatre.[2] This is not to say that no social plays were produced at this time. Throughout this whole period German translations of works by Augier, Sardou and Dumas were a basic part of the repertoire of most German theatres and enjoyed very great popularity. But, as critics frequently pointed out, the popularity of these plays did not stem from the fact that they reproduced or interpreted the actual experience of the spectators who were so fascinated by them; it stemmed rather from their ability to evoke a world unknown in Germany - a cosmopolitan world given to audacious liaisons and intrigues and also, strangely enough, to the sophisticated discussion of complex social issues.[3] Far from challenging the general complacency which, as Julius Bab declared, enshrouded the German theatre at this time, these plays actually served in some ways to enhance it: to heighten the spectator's feeling of the innate decency and orderliness of life in German society.[4] Even when later

in the period German playwrights like Lindau, L'Arronge and Voss began to produce Salonstücke with a Berlin or Munich background the situation, many critics were convinced, did not change substantially. These dramatists were more concerned (they claimed) to re-produce the now familiar situations and modes of development, to recapture the distinctive elegance of tone, than to relate their works to the actual conditions of German society.[5] These works, like most of their French predecessors, seem to have owed much of their success to the fact that they evoked a world far enough from the everyday experience of the predominantly middle-class audiences not to be really disturbing. After the middle of the century, as Martini and others have emphasised, the character of life in Austria began to differ more and more sharply from that in Germany.[6] The experience of repeated military failures and diplomatic set-backs helped to focus a pervading awareness of national decline which contrasted sharply with the growing confidence characteristic of life in Germany. This awareness was generally bound up with, and aggravated by, a sense of living through a profound social crisis the outcome of which could not be clearly foreseen. Many intellectuals were oppressed by the realisation that the great social and economic developments which had affected the whole character of corporate life in Austria had not resulted in any real change in the authoritarian patterns of political and institutional life.[7] And although it was widely believed in liberal circles that some kind of important change could not be long delayed, it was not at all clear how this could be best brought about and what forms it would actually take. It was in this atmosphere of peculiar ferment that Anzengruber decided to devote his energies to the revitalisation of the popular

theatre. His aim was to bring the popular theatre into the heart of this crisis which engulfed the whole of Austrian society, to use it indeed as a means of precipitating this crisis.[8] It was only in the theatre, as he saw it, that he could confront a broad, and only partially educated, public with issues of fundamental social significance which were not generally brought openly before it. He was seeking to use the theatre as a forum in which he could reveal (as far as censorship regulations would allow) the urgent need for reform in every area of life, and at the same time expose the ignorance, superstition and sheer injustice which stood in the way of progress. The instantaneous success of his first serious play 'Der Pfarrer von Kirchfeld' in 1870 showed that he had not overestimated his ability to bring an unsophisticated audience face to face with extremely controversial issues or misjudged indeed the desire on the part of such an audience to be so involved. The appearance of this play, Laube declared, was an event of both theatrical and political importance:

> "Weil hier die empfindlichsten, mit der Religion zusammenhängenden Fragen eines Parlamentes auf einmal schon in Fleisch und Blut vor dem groben Publikum schlankweg auftreten und von diesem Publikum mit einem Verständnisse begleitet werden, dass man sich erstaunt umschaut, nach den oberen Galerien hinaufblickt."[9]

This is the context in which we must see Anzengrubers work. We must never forget that he saw himself as a militantly committed dramatist whose aim was above all to reach out beyond the theatre into the life of society itself. But if we do approach his plays with these considerations uppermost in our minds, we cannot fail to be taken aback by their diversity and strange elusiveness. Reading these plays is no easy experience. It is to be brought face to face

with a creative imagination of immense natural power, but an imagination which is often seemingly disjointed and at odds with its own deepest controlling energies. The work with which one is confronted seems so diverse and uneven as to resist any straightforward critical approach or mode of assessment. Even at a first reading we cannot fail to be perplexed by the sense of an obvious disharmony between the dramatist's strict demonstrative aim and his apparently lax, unself-conscious technique, or between his restricted social preoccupations and the strong visionary tendency of his imagination. A more profound acquaintance with Anzengruber's plays does not do much to lessen this feeling of incongruity; it does not provide a secure vantage-point from which one can see his work as a clear, coherent whole. There are, it is true, misconceptions and inconsistencies in these works which seem easy enough to understand in the light of the peculiar situation in which they were conceived. These are plays, we must not forget, which came into being under the threat of severe censorship regulations, plays often forced into a dependence on oblique, allusive methods which were quite alien to Anzengruber's natural inclinations and abilities.[10] These are also works which, for all their polemic confidence, were born of a severe inward struggle which the dramatist never completely succeeded in overcoming. But these dramas must also be seen as products of crisis in a wider and much more obvious sense. These are works conceived under the influence of a popular tradition which Anzengruber knew to be in decline and which he, moreover, felt to be in important ways out of touch with the world in which he lived. This is something we must look at a little more closely.

Although Anzengruber's sense of commitment to the popular theatre

was the source of considerable imaginative assurance and power which are variously apparent in many areas of his work, it was also the source of constant doubt and self-questioning. Although he could not see his own dramatic endeavours as anything but an extension of the popular tradition, he was keenly and anxiously aware of the limitations of this tradition. All his comments on the popular drama show signs of this basic hesitancy and confusion. He was clearly deeply attracted to the simplified, heightening forms of the popular mode and impressed by its unique power to engage the unsophisticated imagination, but his critical intelligence drove him to envisage its reform in ways which would seem to be finally incompatible with its essentially conventional character.[11] He acknowledged, on the one hand, that its great breadth of appeal stemmed from its ability to exploit a large repertoire of expressive figures and devices which were the common possession of writer, actor and spectator alike and which facilitated easy communication between them.[12] At the same time, however, he was equally convinced that the current decline of the popular drama was due precisely to its unqualified dependence upon these traditional resources. His studies of audience-psychology had convinced him that the ability of the contemporary spectator to respond to the stylised, evocative procedures of the Volksstück had been greatly reduced by his unwillingness to accept the self-sufficiency of the theatrical experience - to see it, in other words, as something independent of everyday probabilities and assumptions.[13] The popular drama could only hope to survive this present crisis, as he saw it, if the expressive power of its conventions could be assimilated to a sustaining dramatic structure more fully in keeping with pragmatic

norms of plausibility and coherence.

Nothing in Anzengruber's statements of artistic intention would seem to suggest that he really gauged the almost insuperable difficulties involved in this purpose of reform. He was attempting nothing less than to relate the values of an expressly theatrical (that is, conventional) tradition to a view of dramatic possibilities which was determined by sceptical, positivistic assumptions. The extent to which this did in fact represent a problematic aspiration, is suggested by the fact that it was inspired not by any vital impulse of development in the popular theatre itself but by recent achievements in the field of the novel, in particular in the Dorfgeschichten of Auerbach and Ludwig.[14] Here he found that synthesis of realistic immediacy and fine ethical idealism which he felt was the greatest need of his time. In attempting to bring a more consistent realism into the popular theatre, he was moving far beyond the confines of this theatre as he knew it.[15] He was aiming, moreover, to create forms of drama which could not be termed popular in any traditional sense, forms which were more experimental and tentative than he seems to have realised.

It is probable then that Anzengruber underestimated the seriousness of the historical crisis in which the popular drama was caught up; it is almost equally probable that he underestimated the difficulties in the way of his own projects of reform. This points, I believe, to what is undoubtedly an important problem in understanding and evaluating his work and it is a problem which will demand careful attention. But it is none the less only one aspect of a vaster and more elusive difficulty. Underlying all the confusions and errors of judgement which might be seen to stem from this

problematic search for synthesis, there is an order of inconsistency which is at once more fundamental and much more difficult to grasp. There is in his work a deeper quality of contradiction pervading not only its obvious weaknesses but also its greatest, most characteristic achievements. The perplexing thing about Anzengruber's drama is that when it is most fully and unquestionably itself, when it realises its own unique potentialities, it seems to come most sharply into conflict with its own overt presuppositions. At those moments when it radiates what has been widely held to be a genuine tragic power, it seems to throw into question the purposes and methods in terms of which it is explicitly conceived. How is it, we are repeatedly forced to ask, that a playwright committed to a moral aim incompatible with tragic insight, proclaiming a philosophy averse to tragic experience and working within a tradition which was avowedly subtragic, should have made some critics (and not always by the most gullible) think of Shakespeare?[16] No attempt to evaluate the work of Anzengruber can shirk this basic, inescapable paradox. It cannot restrict itself to examining those tensions arising out of an uncertain sense of artistic purpose; it must also try to probe that other order of tension which lies beyond the scope of the dramatist's own conscious self-understanding and from which (as I believe) much of the energy of his creative imagination derives. The first aim of such a study must be in my view to explore the different impulses at work in the conception of these plays and to inspect the ways in which they are combined in the creation of a total dramatic statement. Such a study should be governed from the start by a sense of the peculiar power of these plays to resist easy definition and to challenge all ready-made standards of judgement.

## (1) The peasant Plays

We can see clear signs of imaginative tension in Anzengruber's very attempt to create a new form of peasant drama. His choice of a rural setting was not determined by an overriding interest in country people or in the problems peculiar to country life. It was governed rather, as his own comments make clear, by a desire to realise an ambitious project of social analysis with the utmost dramatic effectiveness.[1] He was drawn to the life of the peasant largely by practical considerations. It attracted him primarily because it was more stable and confined than that of the city dweller, more fully enclosed by inherited customs and more fully governed by a small number of basic relationships. In this narrower and still essentially unified world it was possible, he believed, to lay bare the essential character of those conflicts which in much more complex forms pervaded the whole life of modern society. This was closely linked with another practical consideration. The day-to-day life of the peasant in his view lent itself more readily to effective dramatic presentation. It was in itself, as the Dorfgeschichte had shown, more interesting and colourful; but it was above all, he believed, still essentially unified, still free from that split between impulse and action which was characteristic of "civilised" behaviour in the modern world.[2]

There can be no doubt that the choice of the peasant milieu did indeed offer very real practical advantages to the dramatist intent on exploring the foundations of social experience. But what is most striking is that Anzengruber's attraction to peasant life was more complex and contradictory than he seemed to realise. On the one hand

he saw his preoccupation with the rural scene as determined primarily by sociological considerations; the world of the peasant presented itself to him as a sphere open to total investigation. Its supreme advantage from this point of view lay in the fact that it was fully accountable: that every aspect of this existence could be clearly related to every other in a coherent analysis of environmental process. But he was also drawn to the peasant world (as we have seen) by the sense that this was a world still responsive to the energies of passion, that love and hate were here still expressed in direct physical confrontations.[3] Its attraction for him also stemmed, in other words, from the fact that it was a sphere still open to the intrusion of naked irrational forces. The eruption of such forces could indeed be related at times to the pressures of environment; but they could not be fully and consistently accounted for in any diagnosis of social processes, however complete. They would seem rather to represent an area of uncharted power which might at any time disrupt the systematic attempt to calculate or categorise the tendencies of human behaviour.

Inherent in Anzengruber's own view of his peasant dramas there is a potential conflict of insights and sympathies which is all the more significant since he himself does not seem to have been fully aware of it. This is indeed, as I see it, symptomatic of a fundamental imaginative tension which reveals itself in different ways throughout these plays. This can be most readily seen if we note the precise nature of his polemic aims in these plays and observe his attempts to negotiate them in dramatic form. The tendency of Anzengruber's propogandist aim in these peasant plays is most clearly announced in the strictly schematic grouping of characters. On the one hand

there are those who are seen as enslaved to the corrupting metaphysic of orthodox Christianity. These appear consistently as beings estranged from their own emotions and from the immediate responsibilities of their day-to-day existence by the force of their commitment to an unseen world beyond all earthly experience. Opposing these are those who have overcome this imposed estrangement and have won through to a true understanding of the contingency of man's life and of its irrevocable dependence on the given conditions of actual existence. Caught between these conflicting groups, and helping to define the distinctive character of each, is the company of the bewildered and the oppressed: those whose helpless suffering both shows the unchecked power of accepted bigotry and suggests the rare strength of those who have achieved real independence of spirit.

In rural existence, as Anzengruber sees it, to be free is to be alone. There is no clear distinction here between religious and social orthodoxy. Acceptance of the teaching of the Church implies conformity to established patterns of behaviour, while the admission of religious doubt on the part of the individual is enough to place him under immediate communal suspicion. Figures like Hell in 'Der Pfarrer von Kirchfeld,' Steinklopferhanns in 'Die Kreuzelschreiber,' Franz in 'Der Meineidbauer' or Hauderer in 'Doppelselbstmord' are all portrayed as individuals who are prepared to face the full implications of non-conformity. It is an essential part of Anzengruber's purpose in these plays to show that the decisive experience of freedom can only come into being and develop in a state of accepted isolation. The very possibility of self-discovery is seen here as dependent upon the readiness of the individual to accept his

loneliness as the inescapable condition of his life. It is this which makes possible the decisive process of renewal, the transforming of a sense of total break-down into a liberating experience of inspiration. These are all beings who have known a terrible deprivation. Whether, like Horlacher-Lies in 'Der G'wissenswurm' and Steinklopferhanns, they have lived isolated since infancy by the knowledge of their illegitimate birth, or like Hell, Hauderer and Franz, they have lived through a disastrous collapse of family life, they are all figures who have been robbed of the emotional security and warmth which sustain the normal processes of growth.[4] It is, as Anzengruber sees it, the refusal to evade this crucial experience of abandonment which enables them to overcome despair. For it is in the recognition of his powerlessness that the individual can overcome that destructive craving to place his life at the centre of the universe which for the dramatist (as for Feuerbach) is the hidden impulse of theistic belief.[5] These characters are all seen as freed from the limitless demands of their own wills, released from an obsessive self-concern which hides the reality of a world beyond the reach of their own importunate desires. But this experience of humility is not an end in itself; it is seen rather as the preliminary to a final exultant awareness of awe. Figures like Grete in ''s Jungferngift' and Horlacher-Lies are presented as beings consumed by the ultimate mystery that anything should exist at all.[6] This sense of the ultimate miracle of being is most fully and eloquently expressed in the confession of Steinklopferhanns. In the midst of seemingly endless suffering he is brought to the realisation that nothing can ever deprive a man of his place in the all-sustaining order of nature. In this awareness of a final involvement in the

whole life of creation all resentment and self-pity are destroyed:

"Du ghörst zu dem alln und dös all' ghört zu dir!
Es kann dir nix gschehn."[7]

In their overcoming of self-concern these characters in Anzengruber's view become capable of real knowledge, knowledge of their own selves and of those with whom they are in contact day by day. Whatever the differences between these individual figures they are all seen as possessing an unerring clarity of vision which enables them to see through pretence and unreal desire and to sense at once the hidden depths of need in those who suffer. The dealings of Hell, the priest, with the spiteful, embittered Sepp like those of Weldner with the stricken Agnes in 'Der ledige Hof' are characterised above all by the search for a free mutual relationship which is not dependent on outer authority.[8] Similarly, the eccentric kindness of Hauderer which exposes him to such abuse, like the concern of Horlacher-Lies for the broken life of Grillhofer or of Franz Ferner for the injured Vroni, are portrayed as spontaneous expressions of a self-giving sympathy which seeks neither approbation nor reward.[9]

The conception of these figures is charged with a high secular idealism which was immediately inspired by Anzengruber's close, persistent study of Feuerbach's philosophy. There can be no doubt of the vibrant sincerity of Anzengruber's conviction or of the directness of his proselytising aims. But the very urgency of his concern to put these figures forward as the representatives of a new ideological awareness reveals, I believe, a crucial gap between his conscious intention and the effective working of his creative mind. His power to evoke an awareness of personality as a complex, dynamic

whole is such that it undermines his desire to demonstrate its necessary dependence upon a particular philosophical outlook. In the realisation of these figures his creative interest is directed above all towards a half-hidden world of impulse and sensation which underlies and conditions all conscious behaviour. Characters like Hauderer and Horlacher-Lies impose themselves on the imagination as creatures of impulse, beings who draw their strength from their unreflective oneness with their deepest instinctive energies. Our sense of their unique individuality stems finally from the recognition that all their varied feelings, acts and aspirations are in keeping with some deep controlling intuition of which they have little rational awareness. So powerful is this sense of harmonious, unself-conscious vitality that it forces us to question the very role and significance of the discursive intelligence in the development of the integrated personality. It drives us to ask in what ways a philosophical attitude might be said to exert a formative influence on the self-organising processes of the individual's affective life, and to question the character and extent of such influence. In responding to these figures we are aware above all of the shaping power of unnamed forces of temperament and impulse which sustain the whole apparatus of conscious experience. What are those hidden resources, those qualities of resilience, which enable individuals like Weldner or Steinklopferhann to grow inwardly under the shock of severe hardship where others shrink into hopelessness? What hidden power is it that enables them to face up to the full reality of life where others, not outwardly dissimilar, seek refuge in comforting illusions? The fact that such questions are forced upon us is a tribute to the power of the dramatist to lend these figures full

independent life. But in thus bringing us face to face with the mystery of personal existence, they are necessarily unable to serve as the proponents of a particular view of life.

Although the dramatist's preoccupation with semi-conscious and subliminal areas of experience is thus finally incompatible with his conception of these idealised figures, it is fundamental to his attempt to give a clear deterministic account of the processes leading to belief. His analysis proceeds throughout from the unquestioning conviction that the religious faith of an individual can be totally explained in terms of pressures in his inner life which he is unable to understand or confront. His aim in all these peasant-plays is to lay bare a treacherous, unacknowledged egotism at the heart of all metaphysical aspiration. The beliefs of figures like Finsterberg in 'Der Pfarrer von Kirchfeld,' Ferner in 'Der Meineidbauer' or Eisner in 'Stahl und Stein' are always represented as growing out of an awareness of their own election, of their own supremacy, in the sight of God. The will to accept the reality of a supernatural order appears in this perspective as a mechanism through which the individual masks his real motives from his conscious mind and gains a final justification for his deepest hidden desires. The character's sense of the supervening power of Providence is constantly seen as overwhelming his imagination at the point where he is made inescapably aware of the limitations of his own strength. In 'Der G'wissenswurm' and 'Stahl und Stein', for instance, the protagonist's feeling of dependence on the supernatural is shown to stem from his fearful awareness of old age and of a steep decline in his natural energies; in 'Der Meineidbauer' and 'Hand und Herz' it is similarly seen to derive from a terror of losing

something on which life itself seems to depend.[10] The transfixing awareness of a power beyond all human control or understanding is induced in each case (as Anzengruber portrays it) by a refusal of the instinctual self to accept the restrictions inherent in the given situation; it is fired by the unconscious attempt of the individual to bend reality to his will. The effect of such a belief in the subservience of man's life to supernatural powers is to allow the individual to approve as foreordained (and therefore inescapable) courses of action which he secretly desires but which are in conflict with the principles which normally direct his behaviour. And once he has made this decisive abrogation of his responsibility he must, as the dramatist sees it, increasingly lose his grip on the real world. For he has in effect surrendered the only means he has of judging and regulating his own experience. Any conjunction of circumstances or even of passing sensations can impose themselves on his fevered imagination as irresistible proof of divine involvement in human affairs. The visions of Josepha in 'Die Kreuzelschreiber' or of Agnes in 'Der ledige Hof' reveal a world which corresponds to their own deepest desires.[11] In 'Hand und Herz' and in 'Der Meineidbauer' this process of self-delusion is more fully portrayed. In the former play Katharine can persuade herself that Weller's failure to question her about her past life is a sign that God approves her desire to marry again and that her husband, whom she has not seen or heard of for years, must be dead (pp.147ff.). Ferner, the central figure in 'Der Meineidbauer', similarly interprets the chance disappearance of his brother's letter as evidence that God has intervened to right the great injustice which has been inflicted upon him (pp.49ff.). Later it is the appearance of his daughter

dressed "like an angel" in white which assures him that Heaven has not forsaken him even in his readiness to swear a false oath before the court (p.58). This points to what is, in Anzengruber's analysis, the most ominous power of superstition: that it can pervert man's rational faculties and exploit them to its own unreasonable ends. The depraved mind, as he represents it, is capable of sustained intellectual cunning. The processes of self-delusion which warp the integrity of figures like Katharine, Eisner or Ferner all involve finely calculated manoeuvres of correlation and interpretation. These characters all possess a common facility for bringing all the different circumstances and impressions which affect their experience into a clear, unequivocal order in which they can see binding proof of a higher ordinance at work in their lives.

Anzengruber's apprehension of the anguished, deranged mind in these plays has generally been considered his greatest artistic achievement. Often indeed it does acquire a sheer visionary intensity which critics have not hesitated to call tragic. And certainly there can be no doubt that this analysis of superstition is upheld by a pervading awareness of the vulnerability of the mind, of the precariousness of its inward balance, which seems to link it with the traditional insights of tragedy. But the fact that this apprehension has such wide suggestive force itself shows that it is at odds with the dramatist's specific polemic purpose. To assent to this diagnosis of self-destructive credulity is to accept a controlling vision of the limitless depths and treachery of the human mind. For this analysis presupposes the exposure of the individual's conscious experience to the distorting force of irrational compulsions which he cannot know, much less resist. Such

a view of the limitations and frailty of all rational processes would seem to proclaim the final insignificance of all reflective attitudes. It would seem to deny them (whatever their apparent content) a consistent determining function in the inner life of the self.

Here, as in the presentation of the normative figures, it is noticeable that the real interest of the dramatist is not so much in the effects of social influence as in the directing force of hidden inner energies. His repeated attempts to contrast the alienated characters with their enlightened counterparts make this particularly evident. What draws father and son into fatal conflict in 'Stahl und Stein' is not any acquired attitude but a basic temperamental likeness. This is announced in the physical similarity between them which neither, significantly, is able to perceive (pp.197 & 264). Although the social experience of the two men differs so widely, although they entertain such opposing views of life, they are both equally helpless against the inborn force of violence which binds them in uncomprehending hatred. What finally separates father and son in 'Der Meineidbauer' is, likewise, an equally simple (and inexplicable) difference in disposition. Franz appears as an individual endowed by nature with a will which tends even in revolt towards acceptance and compromise.[12] His father's whole life, on the other hand, is determined by some similarly ineradicable need to possess and dominate over which he has no rational control. In these works, as in 'Hand und Herz', we are confronted by a mystery which has always enthralled the human imagination: the mystery of the will which cannot submit, which will not accept the inevitable. Here we come face to face with beings

capable of an intensity of desire which is beyond the reach of ordinary men. These are figures in the grip of a power which dissolves all prior ideals and commitments. As Katharine says in a moment of rare lucidity: "Die Leidenschaft fragt nicht nach Gott noch Menschen." The creative imagination of the dramatist is here finally engaged (it seems to me) in apprehending the ageless mystery of a self-obsession which is so total, so unyielding, that it can in the end only destroy the self.

It is the supreme irony of Anzengruber's work that it should realise with such direct force a kind of tragic effect which contemporary playwrights arduously pursued but rarely if ever achieved. How ironic it is that this dramatist so indifferent to academic notions of tragedy, should have evoked this truly primitive awareness of human exposure which was not only contrary to his conscious intention, but also so closely in keeping with the theories of tragedy current in his age. Anzengruber's perception of character, paradoxical as it may seem, is governed finally by that same drive to surpass the social and explore the primordial energies of the self, which had determined all orthodox views of tragedy throughout the previous century. The sense of man's infinite capacities of self-corruption which so strongly pervades these plays, was generally accepted in his own day as the defining characteristic of a real tragic vision.[13] In particular, his awareness of the subservience of reason to unconscious constraint (which he sought to present as a symptom of a specific cultural malaise) seems very similar to the traditional view of man's inherent vulnerability as a moral being. Already in his 'Hamburgische Dramaturgie' Lessing had seen the instability of man's knowledge of himself as a precipitating

factor in the process of tragic self-destruction. Here, most notably in his criticism of Corneille, he stressed the distinctive power of passion to invade the whole personality and to press reason and conscience into its service - to force the tragic agent, in other words, to accept his own actions whatever they involved.[14] In A. W. Schlegel's studies of Shakespearean tragedy there is a similar emphasis upon the treacherous weakness of reason. In his study of 'Macbeth,' for instance, he notes the tendency of the impassioned agent to see the promptings of his own deepest self as the decrees of a higher necessity: to regard as foreordained deeds which he himself cannot forebear to commit.[15] This view of the alienating, disorganising force of passion was widely discussed in nineteenth century studies of tragedy, but it was perhaps in Ludwig's 'Shakespeare-Studien' that it found its fullest and most sensitive expression. The distinctive genius of Shakespeare lay for Ludwig in his unique ability to suggest the seemingly limitless power of passion to distort the inborn order of the self and in so doing to violate its every connection with a harmonious cosmos. Tragic passion, as Ludwig repeatedly defines it, is distinguished by that very capacity which Anzengruber sees as peculiar to obsessive superstition - the capacity to usurp the faculties of reason and conscience and in so doing to lend the individual a new ecstatic selfhood beyond the confines of his everyday awareness.[16]

But if Anzengruber did gain any unconscious inspiration from the tragic tradition, then it was most probably from the work of Grillparzer which he knew and valued. There is, I believe, a real and palpable affinity between the popular dramatist's vision of human frailty and that embodied in the tragedies of Grillparzer. In

works like 'Das goldene Vliess,' 'König Ottokars Glück und Ende' and 'Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen' he explored with a new psychological sensitivity the perennial temptation of the tragic figure to claim for himself the liberating sanctions of a transcendent authority. Phryxus, Aietes and Jason, who seek through treachery and murder to gain possession of the Fleece, are all portrayed as beings inspired by the certainty that their actions have a religious validation which places them beyond the normal standards of accepted morality.[17] Lysander, the protagonist in 'Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen,' is likewise seen as pursuing his love for Hero with a presumptuous indifference to danger which is induced by the belief that this love enjoys the protective favour of the gods.[18]

This sense of the ultimate justification of the self is presented in these plays as a sign of man's ineradicable, and essentially timeless, desire to place himself at the very centre of the universe. It reveals in Grillparzer's tragic view the destructive longing of the heroic individual to grasp for himself the power of the gods and create the world anew in accordance with his own demands. These figures are all driven by a self-concern which is so vehement that they can only see the world, like Jason, as the arena for their own self-fulfilment.[19] It is the treachery of this blinding desire which Ottokar perceives just before his death, the hidden will to grasp a power which is God's alone. It is this, he sees, which has underlain his seemingly most selfless aspirations:

> "Wer war ich,Wurm? dass ich mich unterwand,
> Dem Herrn der Welten frevelnd nachzuspielen,
> Durch's Böse suchend einen Weg zum Guten!"[20]

It is important to stress this fundamental, if necessarily

obscured, correspondence between Anzengruber's apprehension of character and that embodied in the central traditions of German tragedy because it can open the way to a fuller understanding of many contradictory aspects of his work. Much of that elusive power which critics have always felt in his best plays stems (as I see it) from the fact that his creative imagination was driven and sustained by a contact with the tragic tradition of which he had no conscious knowledge. This also helps to explain many of the glaring inconsistencies in his work which have always perplexed even his warmest admirers. These can often be seen to stem from an unrecognised drive to evade the limited scope of modes of action designed to articulate the pressures of social experience. He clearly saw himself as adapting the current methods of the popular stage to his own severely analytical purpose; yet there is also, especially in his serious plays, a conflicting urge to evolve freer, more richly evocative forms within which a shaping awareness of powerful infra-personal energies could find full expression. Although these two impulses might at times mutually support one another, they could clearly not be finally reconciled. Inevitably the tension between them is most clearly felt when his imagination was most intensely engaged in the apprehension of inner disorder; but it is precisely at these times, when his creative mind is most fully exposed to this creative tension, that his work achieves these moments of real climax which reveal its full potentiality and ensure its lasting vitality.

It is significant that in his comedies Anzengruber achieved a more consistent formal control without ever revealing that distinctive power of vision sporadically intimated in his serious

plays. In works like 'Die Kreuzelschreiber,' 'Der G'wissenswurm' and 'Doppelselbstmord' he reveals a technical fluency and power which has generally found high critical acclaim. But although we should not underrate the achievement that these works represent, we must also recognise that their artistic assurance stems in no small measure from their close correspondence with the inherited modes of popular drama. But it was only in his comedies that he was able to adopt with relative ease conventional patterns of intrigue and characterisation as the vehicle of his own distinctive insights, without being burdened at the same time by the consciousness of an ambitious experimental purpose.[21] In his attempt to realise a new form of serious popular drama he was still anxious to exploit inherited methods, but he was also aware that his concern to reflect social experience clearly entailed the introduction of new criteria of probability which were at odds with conventional assumptions. His primary aim in works like 'Hand und Herz,' 'Der ledige Hof,' 'Der Meineidbauer' and 'Stahl und Stein' was to reveal a direct causal relation between a crucial disorder in the mind of the protagonist and an ensuing crisis in the life of the community. He was well aware that the effectiveness of these plays as a social statement was dependent upon the consistency with which this process of dramatic development was conceived. This did not commit the drama in his view to severely naturalistic methods of presentation; the movement of social forces could still be most vividly articulated by means of those magnifying, accelerated forms of action embodied in the popular dramatic tradition. At the same time, however, he also recognised that the failure of the contemporary Volksstück stemmed from the fact that it had not been able to

assimilate conventional modes of plot-development to a primary awareness of social causation. The plays of Berg, Elmar and Kayser which dominated the popular stage in the 1860's were afflicted in his view by a basic, disabling incoherence: the attempt to conceive the dramatic action as the embodiment of social forces was constantly thwarted by a conflicting concern to direct it through arbitrary, confusing complications to a predestined (and necessarily conciliatory) conclusion.[22] The creation of a serious popular drama adequate to the needs of the late nineteenth century demanded, as he saw it, the readiness both to see social existence as it actually was, and to devote the dramatic form fully to its effective illumination.

The fact that Anzengruber had such a severe critical awareness of the needs of a new popular form again strongly suggests that his inconsistent conception of the action in these serious plays was not simply the result of a failure of effort or sensitivity but arose out of a genuine tension in his artistic consciousness. His use of the accepted methods of the popular drama, far from reflecting a determining awareness of social processes, seems calculated at times to obscure the significance of the social. This can be most easily seen if we look at his use of conventional structures of complication and resolution in these works. The structure of most of these tragic or near-tragic plays from 'Der Pfarrer von Kirchfeld' to 'Stahl und Stein' can be seen to depend in various ways upon the use of mechanical devices of concealment (the arbitrary withholding of information from the protagonist) and of disclosure (the casual revelation of his most private experience to other figures). In 'Hand und Herz', for instance, it is noticeable that the dramatist

has gone to considerable lengths to remove Weller's ignorance of his wife's past from the sphere of simple convention. He tries to show it as arising out of a unique relationship between two distinct individuals - as the consequence of a crucial failure of responsibility on the part of Katharine, on the one hand, and of the natural unsuspecting candour of her husband, on the other. But although the development of the dramatic crisis is so carefully motivated the final catastrophe is precipitated by extraneous factors which intrude upon the central dilemma. The death of the heroine follows directly from the fact that her plan to run away and evade the pressures of her situation happens to be overheard by the simple-minded, devoted Hans (p.156). Intercepting her flight on a high woodland path he entreats her to return and in the intensity of his supplications succeeds only in plunging both of them to their deaths (pp.171f.). Despite the fact that such disastrous consequences flow from this act of eavesdropping, it has no necessary relation to the emotional crisis of the heroine. There is indeed no attempt to lend the figure of Hans any integral dramatic significance; it is introduced casually as an arbitrary instrument of disaster.

In 'Stahl und Stein' (to take another important example) the problem goes further. Here the inadequately motivated use of conventional procedures threatens to invalidate not only the dramatic climax but the very foundations of the dramatic development. The inadequacy of the dramatic structure from the point of view of Anzengruber's own explicit aims lies in the fact that Eisner's ignorance of his paternity is not set in clear relation to the psychic disorder which the dramatist is at pains to expose. The

failure of the hero to realise in time that Einsam is his son, is shown to depend upon purely external factors. Eisner himself shows considerable urgency in his desire to trace his lost son (pp.233f.; 245ff.). The lack of any conclusive information is seen as due to a failure of imagination or resource on the part of those to whom he has entrusted the search and who are unable to establish any certainty until the confession of the dying woman, along with other evidence, helps to reveal the complicated truth (pp.272ff.). The all-revealing message is brought to Eisner only after he has committed himself to a violent confrontation with Einsam by ordering his arrest; only, that is, when matters are no longer in his own hands and he has been thrown into total dependence on an arresting party which proves inadequate to its delicate mission. Whatever the force of destructive egotism which the dramatist has succeeded in revealing in the figure of Eisner, he has shown no necessary connection between this and the death of Einsam. This appears as an accident brought about against his will by a number of converging factors over which he has no final control. Here, as in 'Hand und Herz', his creative imagination is fired by a sense of catastrophe which has no real basis in the analysis of socially determined illusion which is his nominal concern. The dramatic crisis which is put forward as a symptom of social disorder is brought to the point of disaster through the introduction of accidental circumstances which rob it of its immediate social relevance. This points to what seems to me to be the most striking fact about Anzengruber's use of the conventional machinery of intrigue in these plays. Underlying his strangely inconsistent use of the inherited conventions of plot there is a strong, although largely unconscious,

will to devise patterns of action broad and flexible enough to accommodate an intuitive awareness of the violence inherent in the disrupted life.[23] This inward vision is shaped, it would seem, by some unacknowledged sense of a fatality, of a dynamic of self-destruction, at the very heart of the obsessive passion, which is not clearly grounded in his insight into social causation. Already in 'Der Pfarrer von Kirchfeld,' his first important play, an awareness of infra-personal compulsion is noticeably at variance with his overt social preoccupation. In the opening scenes of the drama the figure of Finsterberg is powerfully established as a source of ominous destructive energy but, as Laube noted in his perceptive review of the play, this energy finds no outlet in the subsequent development of the dramatic action.[24] After seeming to prepare the way for a bitter conflict between two individuals the dramatist moves on to explore a wider, more abstract type of struggle: that between a humane idealistic outlook and the impersonal constraint of ecclesiastical authority, on the one hand, and a bigoted, credulous community, on the other. This tension of interests announced in this early play was never completely resolved, although it was more subtly negotiated in most of his later works. In these plays it is noticeable that the apprehension of abnormal passions comes more and more to exclude social concern in the course of the dramatic development. In 'Hand und Herz,' 'Stahl und Stein', as also in a very different way in 'Der ledige Hof,' the final phases of the action have no value at all as social comments but they do express an underground sense of a fatality at the heart of the hero's compulsion. The violent death of Katharine is only remotely connected with the examination of defective marriage laws but it is

a striking image of the vertiginous confusion of a mind thrust into total dereliction by the loss of its deepest sustaining certainties.[25] The death of Einsam is likewise without immediate social relevance; but underlying the conjunction of circumstances which bring it about the dramatist seems to have felt the shaping force of an irreversible hostility which is briefly but powerfully revealed in the tense meeting of the two violent individuals (pp.215ff.). The use of conventional techniques of intrigue which appears so arbitrary from the point of view of Anzengruber's social preoccupations, seems to be dictated in both cases by an awareness of the elementary powers of destruction inherent in the closest human relationships. This awareness clearly could not find adequate expression in forms appropriate to a consistent purpose of social analysis; it demanded a freedom to manipulate outer circumstances in such a way as to allow a full working-out of those primary, disruptive energies apprehended in the hidden life of the self.

Once we have noted this basic, pervading tension in Anzengruber's creative vision, we are in a position, I believe, to understand the unique position of 'Der Meineidbauer' in his work as a whole. Throughout the past hundred years critics have repeatedly asserted the supreme importance of this play without ever having been able really to account for the causes or exact character of this supremacy. The unique imaginative power of 'Der Meineidbauer' stems in my view from the fact that here alone the dramatist's vision of anarchic inward compulsions has completely absorbed the impetus of his social-moral insight, and that here alone this vision has found full embodiment in the direct, expansive forms of popular drama.

Nowhere else in Anzengruber's work is the whole dramatic conception so completely subordinated to a perception of the divided self. Here alone every aspect of the tragic world serves to show forth the limitless fury of the hero's will and to attest its power to transfix and corrupt his spiritual being. Mathias Ferner is portrayed above all as a man helplessly at odds with himself, the agent and victim of his own consuming desires and the magical beliefs which are their passive instrument. For although at one level of awareness he can convince himself that his actions have been inspired by divine ordinance, he also bears within himself the clear knowledge that he has violated God's laws (pp.80ff.; 87ff.). He appears as a man racked by the awareness that he cannot revoke his crime and the advantages it brings, even though this means that he lives in a state of mortal sin and in danger of damnation (pp.58ff.). Despite the fact that the thought of eternal punishment is so real to his primitive mind, he must go on living in terrorised defiance of man and God. For the sake of his wealth and the power it brings, he is prepared to risk all the horrors of an unseen world in which he so deeply believes.

The source of such a compulsion which holds a man in anguished estrangement from his own self remains dark; it is a mystery of which neither Ferner himself nor any of the others can give any account. The desire to override his brother's will which destroys the bonds of family loyalty and affronts the law is not, as Anzengruber portrays it, born simply of a quest for material gain. Involved in this decisive act is some blind unreasoning search for revenge, some will to make good a humiliation of which the protagonist himself has no conscious knowledge. While his brother

has enjoyed the authority and wealth of the landowner he, as the younger, is forced in his own eyes to live as a hired servant and watch helplessly as his brother destroys himself and his inheritance in a life of sexual excess.[26] The sudden death of his brother inevitably appears to Ferner as an act of judgment - a judgment which he sees himself called upon to fulfil by his illegal action. By seizing possession of his brother's lands, by expelling his mistress and his illegitimate children, he sees himself as reinstating the divinely appointed order and as reasserting the supremacy of the values of piety and discipline scrupulously embodied in his own existence (pp.56f.).

In the presentation of Ferner's crime deterministic insight is continuously transparent to strong mythic suggestion. What in one perspective can be seen as an expression of a materialism characteristic of the nineteenth century Austrian peasantry, appears in another as an act of archaic fraternal resentment which defies all explanations and evokes a sense of timeless tragic possibilities.[27] Much of the characteristic imaginative force of 'Der Meineidbauer' stems from this ability of the dramatist to release an awareness of archetypal tensions in the portrayal of seemingly limited, specified conflicts.

This power to touch deeper levels of imaginative feeling is also clearly revealed in the evocation of a closed, resonant tragic world. The world in which the dramatic action takes place does not appear primarily as an image of actual communal existence. It does not point clearly beyond itself to a wider social sphere of which it is but a characteristic segment; it seems on the contrary totally controlled by the dynamics of a <u>unique</u> tragic struggle. There is

no part of this world which is not moved by the force of the hero's directing will, no life which is untouched by the disruption it provokes. Ferner's act of deception shatters all hope that his brother's family may have of gaining a secure accepted existence (pp.38ff.). It hurls them cruelly into a life of shame and poverty which destroys the mother, thrusts the boy into a life of crime and burdens the more resiliant sister, Vroni, with a weight of bitterness which threatens to warp her deepest capacities for feeling (pp.10ff.; 15ff.). But it is not only the lives of those unjustly dispossessed which are afflicted by Ferner's crime. It leads to the permanent loss of harmony in his own home. His own mother is killed by the realisation of her son's treachery and of the violence which it has released in him (pp.33f.). His young son, Franz, who intrudes unwillingly upon his father's perjury, is cruelly exiled to far Vienna where he leads a guilt-racked existence without family or friends (pp.53f.). And even beyond the confines of the two related families this crime exercises an immense power of destruction. This act which gains legal and ecclesiastical approval and brings increasing social influence to the culprit, is seen as releasing a corroding force of scepticism in the life of the whole community. The spectacle of Ferner's prosperity is something which seems to call in question not only the validity of man's legal institutions, but the goodness of the world in which he lives. Jakob's inarticulate sense of a pervasive futility corresponds closely to the Grandmother's deeply pondered feeling of disillusion:

> "... wie der Meineidbauer sein Hand hat zu Gott
> auf'ghob'n, nur dass ihm die g'studierten Leut' seines
> Bruders Hab und Gut zusprechen, da ist kein Donner
> vom Himmel g'fall'n, die Erd' hat sich nit auftan....
> Seither war's fertig in mir! Do Welt taugt mir
> nit, wo so was drin g'schehn kann. Seit damal
> heissen d'mich gottlos," (p.34).

This gradual exposition of the power of passion to corrupt the closest human relationships is finely fused with a developing action which is also primarily impelled by the same energy of infra-personal compulsion. The violent confrontations and reversals which characterise the movement of the action in 'Der Meineidbauer' gain their imaginative life from their power to project and realise tensions inherent in the nature of the hero's passion itself. This inwardness of the action is all the more striking as the mechanics of the outward development are still largely dependent upon those conventional procedures of intrigue which so often disturb the formal unity of his other plays. It is noticeable that the whole development of the counter-action rests upon the use of those devices of concealment and disclosure which he inherited from the popular drama. The decisive opposition between Franz and his father stems from the fact that as a child he happened to intrude upon his father in the act of destroying the will which was the proof of his criminal deception (p.51). Similarly, the fact that Vroni should now, after years of helpless subjection, be able to challenge the legal position of Ferner is totally contingent on the chance reappearance of the letter in which he had acknowledged the receipt of his brother's will (pp.39f.). In both cases the opposition to Ferner which sets in motion the final stages of the tragic action, presupposes a crucial disclosure of information which seems both accidental and improbable. These devices, however, are here charged with a deep psychological relevance. They both serve in different ways to force upon the hero an awareness of guilt which he has been barely able to repress from his conscious mind. These chance occurrences contrive in two crucial situations to thwart that

compulsive drive to self-acceptance which precariously holds together the conflicting impulses of his fragmented being. His son's intrusion upon his secret is the first sign that circumstances are not simply subservient to his will; it is the first development which he has not foreseen or been able to interpret in his own favour. From now on he must live in the knowledge that his secret is not his alone and therefore no longer fully within his power. The dangers inherent in this situation are only made completely clear to him in the dramatic present when his son finally returns from the city. Here he finds himself face to face not with a child obedient to his wishes, but with a man who has developed in a way contrary to all his expectations. For Franz has not trained for the priesthood as his father had ordered; he cannot offer him the costless, unquestioning absolution for which he had desperately longed. The man he now meets is not someone who can reconcile him with God but someone who threatens to dispossess him totally here and now (pp.55; 81f.).

This shocked realisation that he has no privileged way to divine forgiveness is followed by the shattering recognition that the letter, the only document which can prove his guilt, has come into the hands of his enemies. It was the disappearance of the letter which (as Franz jeeringly points out) had appeared to him as a sure sign of God's intervention on his behalf. The knowledge that it has now been found, coming on top of the awareness of Franz's apostasy, can only foment that dislocating doubt which lurks just beneath the arrogance of his outward assurance. And once this doubt has been fully admitted into his consciousness, there is no way back to the spurious safety of his sustaining illusions. For

this doubt, like his earlier certainty, is fed from within, it draws its strength from the same deep energies of unreason in his own mind. Even the (deluded) belief that he has killed his son and destroyed the only evidence against him, cannot long resist the encroaching certainty that he has been abandoned by God (pp.89f.). In the end his spirit is destroyed by the hallucinatory sense of a satanic power which threatens to take possession of him. The stroke which finally shatters his body, coincides with the disintegrating certainty that he has fallen prey to an infernal being which has claimed his soul.

It is common to see these peasant plays of Anzengruber as a kind of crossroads at which different influences and different traditions meet and interact. Bettelheim and Rommel were clearly right to stress the basic rootedness of these works in the tradition of Viennese popular drama; Koessler, in no way seeking to dispute this, was equally right in emphasising the importance of certain connections with mid-century domestic drama in Germany and with the contemporary novel. The Naturalists, notably Schlenther and Brahm, could also justifiably point to tendencies in these works which anticipated the great revolution in the understanding of the drama which took place in the 1890's.[28] All of these elements are undeniably present in his work and help to shape its particular character and atmosphere. Yet when we have listed these influences and imaginative tendencies we have given (it seems to me) no account of the distinctive, if erratic, power which distinguishes these peasant plays. This cannot be seen as stemming from any affinity

with specific traditions or movements; it derives rather from the peculiar intensity with which the expressive possibilities inherent in these different tendencies are absorbed and sublimated (even if inconsistently) in a distinctive vision of the instability of the self. In the most conventional forms of conflict and intrigue, in the agencies of melodrama and spectacle beloved of the popular theatre, he seemed to find those liberating un-naturalistic energies of suggestion which corresponded secretly to his own intuitive sense of disruptive inner violence; in the outwardly so different methods of psychological analysis he seemed likewise (whatever his conscious intention) to find another way of illuminating the precariousness of the order of the psyche. The fact that this unreflective tragic awareness finds such forceful expression through artistic media devised to assert a conscious sense of rational optimism is an indication of its immense potential power. What seizes our attention in these plays at their best is not (as I see it) any quality of insight reminiscent of the work of Nestroy, Auerbach or Ibsen, but a supreme evocative energy which recalls the tragic vision of Grillparzer, his greatest compatriot.

## (2) The Viennese Plays

To his contemporaries, as to later generations, Anzengruber was to remain essentially the author of 'Der Meineidbauer.' His Viennese dramas never enjoyed the popularity or the critical acclaim bestowed, if inconsistently, on his peasant-plays.[1] And certainly there can be no doubt that these works for all their intense moral commitment rarely achieve the rich imaginative life of his best Bauerndramen. The withdrawal from the wider mythical landscapes of the peasant-plays to the immediate actuality of city life brings with it a noticeable contraction of concern and, in general, a lessening of artistic ambition and energy. Anzengruber's creative imagination seems here to come more fully under the control of his discursive intelligence and to remain more consistently responsive to a clear polemic purpose of social diagnosis and exhortation. None the less within this more specific framework these plays do embody a quality of social awareness and concern which is quite distinct from that embodied in the German dramas of the time. No contemporary German playwright attempted to grasp so many social relationships or to portray so many areas of corporate experience, and certainly none of them came so close to Ibsen in the urgent immediacy of his social preoccupations. We should not be put off these plays of Anzengruber by the impression that they merely re-enact the conventional crises and resolutions of domestic drama. For they do represent a serious, although necessarily preliminary, attempt to re-interpret these in the light of a new awareness of the power of economic forces which was largely unknown in the contemporary German theatre. In their pervasive sense of the

exposure of man's personal life in urban society these works, I believe, reveal a new tendency of imaginative feeling which was not to achieve full expression until the advent of Naturalism in the next generation.

In city life as in rural existence the individual, as Anzengruber sees it, is confronted by two contradictory possibilities of experience. He is forced either to embrace the conditions of acceptance and success laid down by society, or to affirm the reality of another way of life determined solely by the needs of his own emotional being. There can be, in his view, no effective compromise between public and private aspirations and the values they each represent. The purpose of these plays is to clarify the nature of this contradiction. They attempt to examine the alienation of the individual who has commited his life to the pursuit of socially approved aims, and at the same time seek to declare his innate ability to live in harmony with impulses which are beyond the reach of distorting social influence. In most of these works the life of the protagonist is apprehended at the point where he becomes aware of the contradiction in himself, where he begins to see the implications of his dependence upon social standards and goals, and to sense the possibility of another order of existence.

This dualistic tendency pervades the whole conception of these Viennese plays. An awareness of the individual's power to grow in accordance with laws inherent in his own nature is in tension with a recognition of the irreversible processes of corporate existence; a view of the renewing power of intimate personal relationships is

consistently offset by a sense of the insuperable disconnection of human beings in the collective life of society. It is in fact a basic part of the dramatist's polemic purpose to detach and circumscribe a closed domestic world as the real arena of morally significant action. It is when he is drawn to see himself in the context of his closest relationships that the protagonist in these plays is generally made to realise that he has been untrue to his deepest self: that in falling under the control of an impersonal world beyond the home, he has become estranged from the creative energies in his own being and the relationships through which alone these energies are sustained and renewed.

The protagonists in these plays, figures like Wellenberg in 'Elfriede,' Hammer in 'Heimgefunden,' Mathilde in 'Die Tochter des Wucherers' or Frank in 'Ein Faustschlag' all come to see the painful crisis in which they are caught up, as a consequence of the fact that their finest potentialities have been distorted by a corrupt world. They are all in their different ways brought to realise that the character of their involvement in social existence has been ruthlessly conditioned by a parental generation totally committed to corrupting, materialistic standards.[2] This generation which controls almost all the economic resources actuating the commercial life of society, have allowed them into positions of power only on condition that they denied all higher aims and ideals. Thus, as they now see with acute regret, the potentially selfless energies of their youth have been diverted in ways they did not understand into the upholding of debased social structures.

This recurrent process of enslavement, however, is seen as taking different forms. In some cases, as for instance in 'Die Tochter des

Wucherers' or 'Das vierte Gebot', the parent persists in regarding the child as the simple instrument of his own will to profit. Oehrlein's whole conception of his relation to his daughter Mathilde presupposes the right to regulate and, if need be, nullify all her emotional responses in the interests of financial gain.[3] The respected and seemingly well-meaning Hutterers claim an identical right even if they do not see it in these terms. For although they have devoted great care and expense to the education of their daughter (or rather precisely because of this), they see themselves as fully entitled to override her passionate love for Frey, her impoverished music-teacher, and to force her into marriage with Stolzenthaler, of whom they know little except that he is heir to a vast fortune.[4] The power of the parent in such cases derives finally (as Anzengruber sees it) from the fact that the child is systematically kept in a position of economic dependence and is therefore completely subject to his will.

But the power of the parent is just as evident in cases where such direct coercion is apparently lacking. Those successful young men like Hammer, Frank and Wellenberg who are driven repeatedly to probe the causes of their self-estrangement, are unable to find any point at which they clearly chose to deny the values implicit in their most intimate experiences. They see themselves rather as having succumbed gradually and unknowingly to an atmosphere of depravity which has surrounded their every desire and expectation from their earliest days.[5] Their readiness to ingratiate themselves with those in positions of wealth and power (a readiness which involves a betrayal of their finest youthful hopes) appears as the outcome of an inscrutable process of subversion in which the

peculiar weakness of the social individual is strikingly revealed. Their eventual eagerness to regard marriage as a means of self-advancement is thus seen as symptomatic of a total surrender to the demands of a world which is wholly under the control of a remorselessly materialist generation.

This debasement of the marital relationship acquires an immense symbolic significance within the context of Anzengruber's total analysis of social life. It appears as a fundamental part of the process through which the alienating pressures of society extend their hold on the personal existence of the individual. For such a depersonalised relationship between husband and wife is seen as necessarily depriving family life of the warmth and harmony upon which the emotional development of the child depends. Children who grow up under such conditions must, it is implied, have very little chance of resisting the disintegrating pressures of corporate existence in the next generation. This circular process is fully enacted only in 'Das vierte Gebot' but its implications are clearly suggested even in such conciliatory works as 'Alte Wiener' and 'Heimgfunden.'[6]

These works are permeated by a sense of pervading social dissolution which has no parallel in the German drama of the time. German playwrights from Birch-Pfeiffer to Lindau proved almost completely unable to convey the alienating atmosphere of city life, even when explicitly presenting sophisticated metropolitan relationships and attitudes.[7] Anzengruber was, as far as I can see, the first dramatist to try to diagnose the power of sheer materialism as the shaping impetus of life in a mass society: to try to show materialism, that is, as a dynamic, self-perpetuating force which

directs and utilises the unconscious wills of single individuals. This is not to say that earlier dramatists had been blind to the influence of money in the life of society, but they had not generally attributed to it a finally determining (and thus potentially tragic) significance. The concern of the Young German dramatists, as of their predecessors in the Sturm und Drang , was to show the ambiguity of those impulses which drove the lower-class individual to seek acceptance in a higher order of society. The social aspirations of Läuffer in Lenz's 'Der Hofmeister,' of Evchen in Wagner's 'Die Kindermörderin' or of Gutzkow's figures like Werner and Gottfried, are shown not to stem simply from a desire for wealth and standing for their own sakes, but rather from a largely inarticulate longing for qualities of order, freedom, beauty or authority which are unattainable in the deprived environment in which they are imprisoned.[8] These aspirations are interpreted as revealing, in however false a form, a quest for fulfilment which has its root in a genuine spiritual hunger. Even in such a severely analytical work as 'Maria Magdalena' it is noticeable that Hebbel presents the driving ambition of Leonhard as the expression not of a naked materialism but of an unconscious will to self-acceptance which can find fulfilment only in his acceptance by the community. This seems to me characteristic of most attempts to conceive a valid social drama in mid-nineteenth century. The tragedy of Meister Anton as of Werner, Gottfried and many others, is seen to derive from the fact that their moral existence is so profoundly influenced by prevailing social assumptions that they are driven to identify their deepest personal needs with those specific attitudes and purposes which are endorsed by the society in which

they live. What distinguishes these works of Anzengruber, on the other hand, is that the protagonist's search for social status is seen as determined by a specifically mercenary drive. Here the corruption of the self does not arise out of a misapprehended attempt to achieve modes of value which seem to be embodied in the finer aspects of social existence. It is shown rather to stem from the individual's surrender to a competitive urge which is fired solely by a lust for wealth and possession. The central figures in these plays are men driven by the blind desire for money which, as they assume, alone determines the status and potentiality of the individual. The scenes in which a parvenu like Frank displays his purchasing power before his emulous, embittered associates, articulate an awareness of social life which has no precedent in earlier German drama (pp.56ff.).

This severe analysis of an acquisitive society is not, however, an end in itself; it must be seen within the context of Anzengruber's ultimate purpose of summons and exhortation. This is already apparent in the fact that the critique of social attitudes is mediated largely by the individual who is struggling to extricate himself from the corrupting influence of his environment. Such figures are all driven to an awareness of the overwhelmingly destructive character of their ambitions and are thus constrained to seek renewal through a total renunciation of their involvement in the wider life of society. Their will to restore the integrity of the self is constantly seen as involving a determination to live at one with their deepest emotional impulses and aspirations. This, in turn, is seen as implying a willingness to renounce those professional functions through which they have participated in the commercial life

of society. Hammer in 'Heimgefunden' cannot undo his irresponsible use of money placed in his trust, but he can, like Theresa in 'Alte Wiener,' (pp.327ff.) open himself to the liberating experience of family love (pp.337ff.). Mathilde, likewise, can do nothing to reverse the effects of the unscrupulous exploitation in which she has been unwillingly involved, nor can she help to change the laws of usury; but she does succeed in severing her relation with her father and in devoting herself to a simple, practical existence in which her kindly, generous nature can find full expression (pp.135ff.).

The limitations inherent in this view of reconciliation, however, are most clearly revealed in 'Elfriede' and 'Ein Faustschlag,' the two works in which Anzengruber scrutinised areas of social experience which were of most acute general concern. In the former work, written some seven years before 'A Doll's House,' he sought to explore the awakening sense of loss and humiliation experienced by the married woman in contemporary society; in 'Ein Faustschlag' he tried to define the tensions between management and labour and in particular to express the feelings of embittered helplessness which, as he saw it, pervaded the whole experience of working men.

In 'Elfriede' the dramatist is at pains to reveal a very serious dissociation between husband and wife. The heroine, like Ibsen's Nora, comes to see her existence as a married woman as a mere continuation of the state of bondage imposed upon her as a child (pp.33ff.; 42ff.). The sudden unexpected reminder of youthful emotions brought about by her meeting with Dr. Knorr, drives her to a full realisation of the sterility of her present life, in which

she is deprived both of freedom and of responsibility. Like Nora she becomes painfully aware that the only function of her existence as a wife is to gratify the desires and illusions of her husband (pp.38f.). Although it is clear that Anzengruber was deeply conscious of the wide social and moral significance of this diagnosis of marital estrangement, he seeks to propose a reconciliation which has relevance only to the private relationship of these two individuals within their own home. The overcoming of the rift between husband and wife is seen to stem solely from their new awareness of each other as fallible, suffering beings and, above all, as beings whose sensitivity has been falsified by destructive social influences (pp.46ff.). The rapprochement between them (and here the contrast with 'A Doll's House' is most marked) arises out of a simple desire to help each other create a new way of life in which they can live together in mutual respect. Their resolve to start again acknowledges no principle or ideal except that given in their unique relationship. It is not, as Wellenberg categorically declares, any sense of ethical obligation or social responsibility which binds them together, but the awareness of the immediate needs of their only child (p.48f.).

In 'Ein Faustschlag' the imaginative preoccupation of the dramatist seems also to contract noticeably in the course of the action. The final reconciliation between Bergauer, the leader of the dissident workers, and Frank, the factory owner, is brought about by the realisation of each man that his opponent is a unique person in his own right with his own particular point of view and claim for respect (pp.85ff.). Although in the vivid expository sections of the play the dramatist was concerned to diagnose the severe sense of

group deprivation which conditions the sensibility of the workers, the resolution of the crisis is determined by feelings and concerns which have no relation to the collective situation of the two individuals. Indeed he goes to some lengths to stress that the emergence of this new sense of mutual responsibility is made possible by the willingness of the two men to disregard their representative social positions and the tensions which these inevitably involve. It is Frank's realisation that he has once, years ago, interfered presumptuously and disastrously in the life of Bergauer which awakens the sense of a compelling obligation towards him and, no doubt, towards other workers like him (pp.78f.). Similarly it is Bergauer's spontaneous acknowledgement of the sincerity of his employer's regret and of his desire to make amends which releases in him a sense of the humanity of this man whom he had seen simply as his opponent (pp.87f.).

The conciliatory climax in these plays is put forward as the resolution of a specific inter-personal conflict - a conflict which is, in other words, increasingly stripped of its general social significance in the course of the dramatic development. In all of these works (with the notable exception of 'Das vierte Gebot' to which we must return) a crisis which is at first presented as having its roots in objective socio-economic circumstances and thus as having significance far beyond the sphere of specific domestic relationships, is finally seen as a purely personal matter which can be fully resolved through a change of attitude on the part of two single individuals. Whatever the symbolic significance of these attempts on the part of the isolated protagonist to create order and harmony in his own life, it is always

completely overshadowed by a pessimistic vision of a society in a state of progressive dissolution. This urban world, as Anzengruber sees it, is a world which has lost all sense of shared loyalty and purpose and has lost its faith in the institutions which nominally enforce the corporate will. Now, there can be no doubt that the dramatist fully intended to stress the severity of this contradiction between the personal and the social. One of his main aims was indeed to define a narrow area of existence over which the moral agent could exert an undisputed control, and in so doing to underline the inescapable character of his responsibility within this sphere. He was seeking in this way to break what he saw as the demoralising sense of dependence which transfixed the imagination of the individual in contemporary society. One of his main concerns, in other words, was to point the extremity of this experience of estrangement in order the more powerfully to express a direct and, above all, specific summons. But even if this is in fact Anzengruber's overt purpose and even if it has an undoubted polemic justification in its own terms, it still does not alter the fact that the moral intention underlying these works is sharply at odds with the shaping impetus of the creative imagination. This can be seen above all, I think, in a severe split between his restricted view of the dramatic action and his pervading awareness of the power of extra-personal processes. The dominant impression we gain from these works is not that of the unconditional character of personal responsibility, but of its limited, precarious effectiveness. The sheer extent of the break-down which the dramatist sees as threatening urban society, is such that it necessarily refutes any hope of renewal which does not arise out of a radical transformation

of the conditions of socio-economic existence.

This is bound up with a further and, it seems to me, still more fundamental difficulty. If, as Anzengruber's analysis suggests, the materialist drive which possesses the individual in capitalist society, is utterly devoid of creative potentiality, then it is difficult to see how its influence can be overcome in the inner life of the self. If the surrender to acquisitive desire does indeed reveal a succumbing to sheer a-spiritual influence, then it would seem to point to a disintegration of the moral self which is beyond any effective remedy. It would seem, that is, to imply that the dependence of the individual on his social environment is much more complex and far-reaching than Anzengruber himself is prepared consciously to concede. There is, as I see it, a basic discrepancy in these plays between the analysis of man's dependence and corruptibility, on the one hand, and the concern to see him as a subject capable finally of transcending from within himself the influence of all non-personal forces, on the other.

The only one of these Viennese dramas in which this basic contradiction is fully resolved is 'Das vierte Gebot.' Here alone Anzengruber succeeded in devising a structure of action which, although in some ways obviously contrived,[9] is fully responsive to the terms of his controlling vision of society. Here alone the consequences of individual failure are not seen solely in relation to family existence but are apprehended in their wider social effects. Indeed in 'Das vierte Gebot' the dramatist has succeeded remarkably in negotiating in dramatic form a complex awareness of the reciprocal involvement of separate individuals in the common life of society.

All the various figures in 'Das vierte Gebot' are unknowingly bound together by the fact that they are all alike caught up in one great corporate process which none of them fully understands. The focal symbol of this shared involvement is the marriage of Hedwig Hutterer and Stolzenthaler. All the four representative families portrayed are implicated in this marriage and thus share in one way or another the responsibility for the terrible consequences to which it gives rise. This is (as we have already seen) a marriage arranged by both sets of parents as a transaction of great mutual benefit (pp.158ff.). In the eyes of both the fathers the child appears as an asset to be ruthlessly exploited in the interests of family wealth and prestige. For neither man has the child any identity but that imposed upon it by the parent in his struggle to enhance his own power in a harsh competitive world. The indictment which Frey, Hedwig's disappointed lover, hurls at her father is quite literally true: "Sie schlagen Kapital aus ihrem Kinde!" (p.164). And it is significant that Hutterer is at a loss to understand the meaning of this accusation.

But although the prime responsibility for this marriage clearly rests with the parents, other characters are also involved in it. The Schön family realise when it is too late, that they too are implicated in this disastrous process of events. Yet this family appears as the only one in the play which, despite its relative poverty, is not affected by the prevailing materialism of society. The Schöns are the only parents who see their son as a person in his own right, free to develop in his own time and in his own way (pp.149ff.). Yet although their self-sacrificial generosity is in such sharp contrast to the accepted ethos of society, they are as a

family (as Anzengruber sees it) still deeply committed to the conventional pieties and ideals which help to uphold those corrupt social structures which they openly oppose. This is first suggested by the fact that it is Anna Schön who in a conventional romantic fantasy first draws Hutterer's attention to his daughter's relationship with Frey (pp.152f.). But, much more important, it is their son Eduard, who is entering the priesthood, who intervenes decisively to help Hutterer overcome his daughter's opposition to the idea of marrying Stolzenthaler. By insisting that it is her divinely appointed duty to obey her parents, Eduard is seen as reenforcing, albeit against his will, the power of debased attitudes in the life of society (pp.224ff.). In attempting to assert absolute moral principles which are valid at all times and in all circumstances, he becomes the involuntary agent of the prevailing social situation - a situation which he is in most specific respects so keen to transform.

The marriage of Hedwig Hutterer is also closely bound up with the life of the dissolute, impoverished Schalanter family. When Stolzenthaler becomes engaged he is forced to break off his relationship with their daughter Josepha, on which the fortunes of the whole Schalanter family precariously depend. For since they have long been unable to pay their rent to Stolzenthaler's father, this association alone has stood between them and eviction. To the girl herself the engagement means the end of a childish dream of love and marriage which has been cynically fostered by her mother (pp.172ff.); but to the Schalanter family as a whole this is a blow from which they never recover. Soon afterwards they completely give up all attempt to earn their living by regular work and try to survive simply by living on their wits (pp.194f.).

The degradation of Josepha is set in close parallel to that of Hedwig throughout the play. Both have been brought up to a life of emotional and economic dependence on the male. Neither has been educated in a way which would enable her to earn a decent living, and when the hope of a happy married life is shattered, both are thrust into a helpless, embittered despair. Whatever the differences in their outward circumstances, as Hedwig clearly sees, they are both beings who have been abused and mutilated by society:

> "Ob an einen oder an mehrere, wir sind ja doch zwei Verkaufte!" (p.231).

It is appropriate that it is the Schalanters, desperately seeking to recover Stolzenthaler's favour, who set in motion the final disastrous developments. Unable any longer to ingratiate themselves by making their daughter freely available, old Schalanter and his son Martin have recourse to observing the movements of Hedwig for which, as they realise all too well, Stolzenthaler must be very grateful - and generous (pp.192ff.). It is their account of her (accidental) meeting with Frey which precipitates both the final conflict between Hedwig and her husband and the violent struggle between Martin and Frey, - confrontations which are seen as enacting the mutually destructive involvement of the different characters in a shared but uncomprehended fate. The murder of Frey, coinciding with the death of Hedwig's sickly child (a child like Ibsen's Oswald "worm-eaten from birth"), symbolises a sickness at the very heart of society by which all its members are in some way affected.

The apocalyptic vision of social break-down expressed in 'Das vierte Gebot' is one of total disillusion. On the one hand, the individual appears as overwhelmingly dependent upon his environment.

Even when he has, like Hedwig and Josepha, a clear intuition of a better life, he is seen as unable to overcome those inhibitions in himself which bind him to the identity imposed upon him by society.[10] Here, in marked contrast to Anzengruber's other Viennese plays, he seems to lack the resources in his own inner life to effect a genuine change. Inward change, it would appear can only follow upon a fundamental transformation of the social environment, but there seems no possibility of such a transformation being brought about by men who are themselves incapacitated by their dependence on society and bereft of any real will to renewal.

The bleakness of this perception of social existence has scarcely any parallel, as far as I can see, in the Naturalist dramas of the next generation. Works like Sudermann's 'Die Ehre,' Wildenbruch's 'Die Haubenlerche' or Hirschfeld's 'Die Mütter,' which were in any case on a much smaller scale, all tried in their different ways to shirk the unalleviated vision of deadlock which Anzengruber was attempting to express.[11] When we contemplate 'Das vierte Gebot' we realise how unfortunate it was for the dramatist that his work should so soon be overtaken and eclipsed by the dramas of Ibsen. For this play articulates a type of preoccupation which was largely foreign to the work of the Norwegian dramatist. Indeed it is not going too far to say that 'Das vierte Gebot' helps us to see a certain bias and limitation in the artistic concerns of Ibsen and of most of his Naturalist successors in Germany. And even if it were for this reason alone, this work of Anzengruber's deserves some new consideration.

## Conclusion

In some ways the historical significance of Anzengruber as a playwright seems clear enough and easy to define. No one can doubt that he restored moral seriousness to a theatre which was in decline and gave new life to a mode of drama which seemed to have become obsolete. But beyond all such essentially local achievements Anzengruber, it seems to me, significantly extended the range of German drama by seeking to represent areas of corporate existence which had never before been subject to serious, concerted scrutiny in the theatre. He was the first dramatist, as far as I can see, to attempt to portray the life of the peasant in a historical perspective - as part of the total existence of a society in process of change.[1] He was also the first German speaking dramatist to attempt to define the peculiar pressures of life in a vast, impersonal urban society.[2] Certainly no dramatist before him had been intent upon grasping so many different aspects of collective existence or presenting so many concrete social relationships. This in itself gives some indication of the extent to which Anzengruber succeeded in enlarging the scope of the social preoccupations of the German drama; it also suggests how seriously his work must be taken as the precursor of the more comprehensive and systematic social enquiries of the Naturalists.

A study of Anzengruber's plays, however, shows that his concern to bring the drama into fuller and more direct contact with social experience was consistently in tension with other imaginative aspirations which he was unable to recognise or to accept consciously. The demonstrative concern which he clearly regarded as the controlling

impulse in his drama, was indeed often noticeably at odds with the deepest, shaping energies of his imagination. This, I have suggested, is symptomatic of a basic dissociation in his work the effects of which are apparent in one way or another in all his plays. His insistent desire to lay bare specific abuses and propose specific courses of reform is only rarely fused with those intuitions of disorder and break-down which impel the working of his creative imagination at its most intense. Certainly, these intuitions do at times seem to be completely assimilated to his understanding of specific social developments and to be powerfully articulated in discursive terms, but they cannot be seen to arise out of a primary, directing awareness of social processes.

The tension between these two different kinds of impulse is most clearly exposed in Anzengruber's strangely inconsistent use of the conventional machinery of collision and complication which he took over from the popular drama. If we try to regard his work as a systematic social investigation, his use of this machinery often seems arbitrary and irresponsible; if we approach it, on the other hand, as the embodiment of a visionary sense of inward disorder, his employment of these inherited procedures often acquires new meaning. These apparently unmotivated meetings, disclosures and misunderstandings can then be seen to subserve an awareness of a progressive break-down in the hidden life of the self. They appear as the means by which this inner crisis is revealed, intensified and brought finally to the point of total collapse. It would seem that the dramatist intuitively regarded the violence of figures like Ferner or Eisner as inherently self-destructive and that he saw the pressures which impinge upon it in the course of the action, as

merely accelerating a process of psychic disintegration which was already far-advanced and irretrievable.

In none of these plays, as far as I can see, is the source of this inner break-down really revealed. Whatever the dramatist's conscious intentions, he sees figures like Katharine, Eisner, Ferner, Hedwig and even Martin and Josepha Schalanter as choosing a way of life, a course of action, which they know to be wrong and which they sense all along must bring disaster upon them.[3] He sees them as knowingly violating what is best in themselves. The source of this perverse drive which destroys the order of the self and thwarts its deepest aspirations remains hidden. It appears simply as a mysterious, irrational compulsion in man's nature which forces him to disregard his own deepest needs and to choose his own destruction. Although these plays of Anzengruber's sometimes do succeed in evoking an intense impression of reality, although they often reveal a meticulous awareness of the working of social forces, they are in conception poetic works. To respond to them, we have to be able to suspend our everyday expectations, our sense of the way things actually happen in the real world. His most integrated and compelling dramas are those in which an underground, and essentially visionary, apprehension of catastrophe acquires such force that it contrives to bring into being a self-contained tragic world totally engulfed in a disorder and violence against which all the characters are defenceless. In 'Der Meineidbauer' and 'Das vierte Gebot' the dramatist has in my view succeeded in creating such a tragic world - a world in which all the dramatic figures seem to gain their reality and stature through their involvement in an irreversible process of fatality. In the latter play in particular

we can see the depth of a controlling pessimism which was usually to some extent distorted or disguised by the confidence of his reformist purpose. In pursuing the destinies of the four families Anzengruber seems to have been driven to apprehend nothing less than the death of society itself. The failure of each family is so involved with the failures of the others, that they contrive blindly and unwillingly to destroy one another. Even though some of their members live on after the manifold disasters, none of these families is able to give birth to a child which survives. For these families and for the world in which they live there seems to be no future and no hope.

# III Naturalism

## (1) Naturalist dramatic Theory and the dramaturgical Tradition

What drew together the radical young writers in Germany in the mid 1880's was above all an intense common feeling of disillusion. These individuals with their different aims and aspirations were at first really only linked by the shared conviction that literature had increasingly lost touch with life: that although the whole character of social existence was changing rapidly and in the most far-reaching ways, the preoccupations and objectives of most writers (and critics) had remained limited and unchanging.[1] It was really this deep sense of opposition to established literary values which drew them into a provisional alliance and lent them a feeling of common purpose. When it came to showing what steps would have to be taken to overcome this disabling rift between art and life, it became clear that the area of real agreement between them was in fact fairly limited. But although the specific proposals of figures like Heinrich and Julius Hart, Bleibtreu, Conrad and Wolff were quite often in conflict with one another and although bitter antagonisms came more and more to shatter the very appearance of unity, their different demands can be seen to have rested on one basic common assumption. In their different ways they were all equally convinced that the renewal of literature would entail a significant change in the character of the artist's engagement with reality and that this could only be brought about by a new integration of imaginative and intellectual impulses.[2] The vision of the really contemporary artist, they all insisted, would be marked by a new openness; it would be less constrained not only by his own personal prejudices and inhibitions but also by accepted

notions of artistic relevance. It would be impelled by a new concern to grasp the uniqueness of each specific experience and of the situation in which it came into being, and at the same time by a desire to explore the involvement of this experience and situation in the enclosing processes of corporate life.[3] However much their concrete assessments and proposals differed, most of the Naturalists in the late 1880's were keen to emphasize that a literature capable of really confronting contemporary experience would be at one and the same time broader and more specific in its concerns, more sensitive to the particularity of persons and circumstances, and more comprehensive in its apprehension of social relationships.

In their attempts to outline what they saw as the peculiar obligations facing the modern writer almost all the Naturalists, as Praschek has pointed out, were aware that they had been deeply influenced by the findings of contemporary science.[4] Towards the end of the decade Bölsche, Alberti, Wolff and others were very concerned to show that the outlook of this modern post-Darwinist age had been determined by a transforming awareness of the unity of all life. The discoveries of science, they repeatedly claimed, had forced contemporary man to see that those distinctions between animal and human, mind and body which had traditionally controlled man's understanding of his own existence had been largely illusory and extremely misleading.[5] These discoveries had also driven him to acknowledge that his dependence upon his material circumstances and his day-to-day experience was both more complex and much more far-reaching than he had ever supposed.[6] It was, as both Bölsche and Alberti saw it, part of the distinctive responsibility of the contemporary artist to vindicate this scientifically established

vision of order: to reveal in any given situation the innate significance of small or hidden factors which in an earlier age would have been completely overlooked.[7] Both Flaischlen and Steiger were similarly concerned to show a direct connection between this new view of the expository methods of the artist and the diagnostic procedures of the scientist.[8]

Here, it seems to me, we touch the very nerve of the new movement's reformist aim. Although in the late 1880's more and more serious disputes arose between individuals who regarded themselves as Naturalists, they were all none the less fundamentally agreed that the new scientifically ratified outlook of the age was incompatible with the central unspoken assumption of earlier aesthetic systems that it was man's spiritual and moral experience which was the real controlling subject of all literary preoccupations.[9] They were all convinced (although here individual views did differ considerably) that the emergence of this new open, monistic view of human life involved the acceptance of quite new standards of artistic significance and value; that this view which so radically qualified the assumed priority of the personal, was inescapably at odds with an aesthetic tradition which was overtly and unquestioningly anthropocentric.

Throughout the 1880's the critical understanding and aspirations of the German Naturalists were determined, as some commentators have already noted, by an overwhelming concern with the novel.[10] This was widely felt to be the Naturalist form par excellence - the only form flexible enough to negotiate the broader and more fluid outlook of the modern age. Alberti was expressing a widely held conviction when he described the novel as "die Dichtung der

ununterbrochenen organischen Entwicklung und darum recht eigentlich die Form des darwinischen Zeitalters."[11]

The evident failure of the drama to respond to the challenge of the new age seemed to confirm the general view that it was an essentially selective form demanding a fundamental re-ordering and re-defining of experience which were at variance with the whole tendency of the Naturalist understanding of literature.[12] In all the very varied critical statements of this confused and iconoclastic decade there are very few which give any real sign of the development of a new conception of the drama.

## II

The rapid growth of interest in the drama at the very end of the 1880's and throughout the Nineties reveals a noticeable shift in the temper of German Naturalism. It shows an increasing movement away from the radical, doctrinaire preoccupations of the previous years and a reaching-out towards wider and more flexible notions of realism. These discussions of the drama took place in a situation in which critical interest in ultimate philosophical and aesthetic issues was giving way more and more to a concern with more limited, immediate problems of literary reform. They were conducted by figures like Berg, Steiger, Harden, Schlenther and Brahm, who were primarily engaged in elucidating and guiding the emergence of new forms of drama which had not yet found general critical acceptance. These discussions of the drama were more fully dominated by an awareness of the theatre than any earlier in the nineteenth century and it is no accident that they were conceived for the most part in terms of practical criticism. This is not to say that they could

be detached from the awareness of wider aesthetic and moral questions. On the contrary, Naturalist critics clearly saw that their desire to make the drama the vital focus of contemporary experience necessarily involved them in those controversies which pervaded the whole fabric of modern social life. They were all aware that however specific their reformist aims might be, they sprang finally from a will to foster certain specific tendencies of imaginative insight, to affirm specific aesthetic values, and that this must sometimes demand explicit defence. None the less it is still, I think, true to say that considerations of the drama in the late Eighties and Nineties were generally governed by a consciousness of immediate practical aims, and by a consequent readiness for compromise, which were not conducive to doctrinaire abstractions.[13]

It is in this context that we must see the central, progressive confrontation of the German Naturalists with the work of Ibsen. The development of their conceptions of a realistic drama directly reflects their growing understanding of the originality and significance of his artistic initiative. The social dramas of his middle and later periods were both the essential object of their enquiry and more and more its controlling standard. To those seeking to explore new dramatic possibilities at the very end of the Eighties these plays seemed to overshadow other dramas of the time so completely as to represent a quite separate order of artistic achievement. Yet at the same time they seemed supremely contemporary: to negotiate creatively all those disjointed imaginative impulses which elsewhere found only fragmented, tentative expression. The work of Ibsen thus came to constitute a unique focus of critical preoccupation. In the concrete study of these plays the Naturalists were able to come face to face with all the basic problems

confronting the realistic drama, and at the same time to apprehend far-reaching possibilities of creative resolution which were not clearly intimated elsewhere.

This sense of the great integrative power of Ibsen's vision underlies most Naturalist discussions of his work. Some critics, like Berg, might be primarily concerned with its ethical implications, others, like Schlenther, with its power to observe actual experience, still others, like Brahm, with its potential theatricality; but the ultimate preoccupation of each of these commentators was not with any specific aspect alone but with the question of how this was integrated in the dramatic conception as a whole.[14] However much the tendencies of their individual concerns diverged, they were all seeking in one way or another to explore the coherence of this creative vision in which they sensed a unique power to negotiate separate and divergent impulses. Berg's analysis of Ibsen's moral outlook could not be separated from a basic concern with the possibilities of realism in drama, just as Schlenther's preoccupation with the Norwegian's techniques of observation was closely bound up with a wider interest in questions of dramatic form.[15] The discussions of Ibsen's drama by these figures, as by most of the Naturalists, are characterised above all by a constant tendency to change modes of approach - to modulate incessantly between psychological and formal preoccupations, or to move repeatedly from analyses of technique to broader moral questioning. This is no accident; it is characteristic of the Naturalists' basic preoccupation with Ibsen. Their unique respect for his work arose from the sense that in it analytical energy was nourished by intense moral passion, that social concern was here fused with an

intense formal aspiration. Here alone they acknowledged a mind which was open to all the crises of the modern world yet which still drew its strength from a profound rootedness in their literary heritage. This is something which has important implications and which we must look at in detail.

There can be no doubt that the Naturalists were drawn to Ibsen in the first place by the belief that his dramas reflected, clearly and incisively, the tensions of immediate social experience. With these works, they believed, the drama had become for the first time for over a century a rival to the novel as a vehicle of social exploration.[16] This capacity of the dramatic form to dissect and substantiate was widely felt to go far beyond the analytical possibilities which had traditionally been attributed to the drama. For most of the Naturalists the central technical achievement of Ibsen lay indeed in the fact that he had evolved a dramatic form in which an impulse of diagnosis had largely replaced the manipulative methods of earlier drama. He had in their view freed the shaping energies of the drama from a distorting dependence upon the mechanics of plot-development and made them subserve a realist purpose of social-psychological enquiry.[17] The decisive step which he had taken, as Brahm, Kühnemann, Berg and Schlenther saw it, was to turn dramatic interest inwards upon the complex consciousness of socially representative figures. This introversion of concern, they believed, had made possible a fuller, more intensive realisation of character.[18] It had made available to the drama the possibility of establishing a whole new range of reference: of embracing through the probing reminiscences and reflections of the dramatic figures a wealth of relationships not accessible to direct presentation. In

Ibsen's work, as for instance Schlenther, Steiger and Marholm claimed, the drama had gained a new ability to apprehend characters in the totality of their development.[19] In proportion as the outer action was reduced, both Brahm and Kühnemann pointed out, the reach of the drama over time and place had been extended and it had acquired a new breadth and flexibility.[20] It was clearly this power of Ibsen's analytical form to substantiate the pre-history of the dramatic figures, to show experience in the imaginative present as dependent upon complex developments in the past, which made his work seem capable of achieving a degree of psychological discrimination which was unprecedented in the drama. They repeatedly drew attention to the fact that in this mode the dramatic crisis was conceived as the essential focus of the unbroken continuity of life, revealing the governing power of a past in which both the present and the future were contained.[21] The primary tendency of Ibsen's creative imagination, as Kühnemann put it, was to grasp all aspects of existence in terms of rigorously unfolding process.[22] This belief underlies in one form or another almost all Naturalist discussions of Ibsen's work. It was a crucial part of his artistic achievement in their view that he had found the means of effecting what Arthur Miller has described (also in reflecting upon Ibsen) as the most difficult task facing the dramatist - that of "dramatising what has gone before",[23] of revealing the shaping force of the past in the apparent spontaneity of the present. In so doing, the German Naturalists believed, he had decisively extended the imaginative scope of the drama and made it fully responsive to the determinist tendencies of contemporary insight. His reputation as a dramatic realist (and this was seen by at least some of the Naturalists)

stemmed largely from the fact that he seemed to have shown the drama capable of adopting methods of presentation which had gained unchallenged authority in the novel.[24]

But although Ibsen had greatly extended the powers of the drama as a vehicle of analysis and elucidation, his work was still conceived, as most of the Naturalists saw it, in fully dramatic terms. This they were constantly at pains to emphasise in the face of widespread opposition. Despite the force of his deterministic insight the governing tendency of his creative vision was not, they insisted, expository but dynamic and progressive. Brahm, Steiger, Schlenther, Berg, Brand and Kühnemann all tried to show the functional significance of analysis in the total conception of his plays.[25] The diagnosis of past developments, they all variously claimed, was consistently assimilated to a perception of a consuming crisis in the dramatic present - a crisis still demanding resolution. In the most diverse discussions of these critics there is a constant desire to explore the relations between the elucidation of the conditioned experience of the dramatic character, on the one hand, and the character's own maturing concern to understand and re-assess his experience, on the other. This vision of urgent, momentous self-confrontation was (as most of them saw it) at the very heart of Ibsen's creative preoccupation. The fact that such a crisis was seen to embrace the whole inner life of the individual as it had evolved over the years, did not, Brahm insisted, lessen its dramatic force but served to lend it a peculiar, eruptive intensity.[26] This conviction was reiterated in one form or another in almost all Naturalist discussions of Ibsen. It was a prominent part of their defence of his art to show that this intense preoccupation with the

past was not a crude "epic" means of imparting information to the audience, but an organic expression of the spiritual crisis of the protagonist. In works like 'A Doll's House', 'Ghosts' or 'Rosmersholm' the concern of the individual to understand the course of his existence sprang inevitably (they claimed) from his inner turmoil; it served to elucidate this turmoil and in elucidating it, to bring it to a new stage.[27] This whole process of exposition was controlled, as, for instance, Schlenther and Brand insisted, by a scrupulous psychological concern. The propriety of this retrospective method in the view of these and other critics lay in the fact that its first function was to clarify the dramatic figure's own understanding of the crisis in which he was caught up and thus to advance the inward moral action of the play.[28] In this the Naturalists generally saw evidence of that fine fusion of realistic feeling and formal sensitivity which they regarded as characteristic of Ibsen's artistic achievement. The whole character of this response is, I believe, an important index of their understanding of his drama. Although (as we have seen) they attached very great importance to his ability to extend the imaginative scope of the drama by means of an intricate structure of subjective recollection, they were almost all equally keen to stress the indirect and cumulative character of this process and to show its close involvement in the total movement of the dramatic action.

This power of Ibsen's to transmute an extensive process of analysis into vital, organic action was for the Naturalists the mark of his essentially dramatic genius. The strong explicative drive of his imagination was, as they saw it, consistently subsumed in a directing awareness of unfolding conflict. This points, as I have

suggested, to a basic tendency in their understanding of Ibsen's work. Underlying the responses of most of the Naturalists was a profound need to show that the structure of these plays conformed fully to accepted definitions of the dramatic. The nature of this concern is itself significant. The majority of Naturalist discussions of the drama reveal surprisingly little interest in the character of the assumptions underlying these definitions; in most cases they were simply accepted as the basis on which all fruitful enquiry must take place.[29] The aim of most of these enquiries was not to articulate a new view of the dramatic form but to probe the ways in which inherited formal categories could be reconciled with the demands of the contemporary imagination. The corporate belief in the guiding authority of Ibsen's work grew out of the conviction that he had evolved a dramatic structure which could accommodate empirical insight while still retaining its essential formal character. He had created, they generally believed, an analytical mode in which the inherent energies of the dramatic could find valid contemporary expression.

This widely shared concern of the German Naturalists to uphold inherited formal categories which is apparent in all their considerations of Ibsen, is also clearly revealed in many of their other critical activities. But it is perhaps most clearly apparent in their general and consistent hostility to works in which they saw the dramatic structure subordinated to a process of total analysis. Plays like 'Henriette Maréchal', 'Thérèse Raquin' or 'Die Familie Selicke' which one might be tempted to regard as characteristically Naturalist works, found very little favour in the eyes of influential figures like Steiger, Brahm, Harden, Wolff and von

Wolzogen.[30] Although these critics all variously acknowledged the power of these plays to establish a sense of individualised character and define a complex pattern of causation, they regarded them as inherently undramatic because they were not conceived in terms of tense, progressive movement. These dramas, they repeatedly stated, were born of an "epic" will to expose and substantiate which was finally incompatible with the propulsive energies of the dramatic form.

This opposition of most of the German Naturalists to the severely diagnostic tendencies in contemporary drama sprang from the very heart of their critical endeavour. The confidence with which these tendencies were consistently analysed and rejected, reveals a shared sense of purpose which was decisively shaped and refined in the study of Ibsen. Here, I believe, the depth and extent of their involvement with the vision of the Norwegian dramatist is uniquely revealed. For this strong critical reaction against those radically positivistic works which were coming more and more into prominence, was determined not by formal considerations alone but by a wider and more elusive sense of literary aim which embraced a whole range of aesthetic and ethical impulses. However much conservative critics emphasised the similarities of insight and method linking these works with the dramas of Ibsen, the Naturalists were convinced of a genuine imaginative discontinuity between them - a discontinuity which they were constantly at pains to define. Such enquiries usually proceeded from an insistence upon Ibsen's uniquely challenging view of character. In his work, they repeatedly asserted, the individual was never conceived as the mere function of a determining situation; even when his life seemed totally in bond to impersonal

forces, he was still seen as a complex spiritual being. This apprehension of character was the constant focus of concern in the discussions of Kühnemann, Berg, Brahm, Steiger and Schlenther.[31] All of these critics were in their different ways anxious to show that the subjective life of a Nora, a Mrs. Alving or a Rosmer was not simply an arena of warring compulsions but also a centre of moral inwardness which was underivative and essentially mysterious. These characters, they claimed, were certainly portrayed as the victims of corporate delusions, of inherited fears and prejudices which they could not fully comprehend; few modern writers indeed had analysed the exposure of the moral self with such remorseless clarity. Yet there was in these figures, as Schlenther characteristically insisted in his study of 'Little Eyolf', some inherent vitality of spirit, some power of growth, which defied all reductive definition.[32] It was indeed this division in the self, the Naturalists generally believed, which was at the very centre of Ibsen's creative preoccupation: in this he had seen the possibility of a drama which was supremely modern yet which retained the imaginative intensity of traditional forms. The distinctive concern in his social dramas, as most of the Naturalists saw it, was with the individual who is forced to confront an existence from which he has become increasingly estranged, to come to terms with a self he can no longer acknowledge. No one pondered the implications of this dramatic vision more fully than Brahm. Ibsen's development as a dramatist he came to see as a movement away from the contrivances of the well- made play towards a more purely psychological form. With 'A Doll's House' the Norwegian had made the decisive step towards a new dramatic inwardness, towards

> "einer neuen, verinnerlichten modernen Kunst, welche seelische Entwicklung und Darstellung von Charakteren über Theaterintrige und Spannung setzt."[33]

In these works, he claimed on another occasion, the highest possibilities available to the drama in the nineteenth century were fulfilled:

> "Seelendramen sind es, voll reicher innerer Bewegung, die der Dichter so vor uns entrollt; und vielleicht entspricht es dem tiefsten Wesen der modernen Zeit, wenn nur in Gedankenkämpfen, nicht in Handlungen von äusserer Belebtheit, die Helden dieser Tragödien ihr Wollen offenbaren."[34]

Existing studies of Naturalist literary theories have in my view generally underestimated the extent to which these are controlled by a profound, shared awareness of tradition. If the study of Ibsen's plays led German Naturalists to revalue aspects of their dramatic inheritance which had remained on the fringes of critical concern, it is equally true that the character of their responses to his work was conditioned by preoccupations which arose directly out of a shared consciousness of their native literary tradition. In their reading of the Norwegian's drama, revolutionary concern was always permeated and, in varying degree, modified by a conservative aspiration. The belief that this radical psychological drama marked a significant progression in the development of the modern theatre was inseparably bound up with the conviction that it triumphantly vindicated inherited formal values; the belief that it opened up whole new possibilities in the realisation of dramatic character went hand in hand with the assurance that it articulated a traditional, essentially 'Germanic' vision of personality. Their constant tendency (whatever their express aims) to put forward Ibsen's plays as the model of valid dramatic realism,

denotes a view of dramatic form which is basically at odds with a severely positivistic outlook. It denotes a fundamental concern to assimilate empirical insight to a transcendent order of imaginative significance. The action in Ibsen's dramas, as most of the Naturalists saw it, was the embodiment of genuine moral conflict. This introspective form was not directed towards a diagnosis of the random flux of the inner life, of "the shifting current of transparent thoughts and fancies, which were gone and succeeded by others as soon as come;"[35] it sprang rather from a vision of sustained spiritual crisis.[36] That they should have seen the tensions of inner division as capable of sustaining a vital dramatic structure implies a view of the protagonist as both morally active and significant: as able not only to conceive rival possibilities of behaviour but also to make serious moral decisions.

Their whole understanding of the development of realism in drama presupposed (I would claim) a continuing, exclusive concern with characters who are, in Henry James' phrase, "full vessels of consciousness," who, like his Kate Croy, are made "for being and seeing."[37]

Despite their various acknowledgements of the deterministic world-view of contemporary science the idea of dramatic agency put forward by German Naturalists was still deeply influenced by attitudes inherited from the idealist tradition. In Ibsen's drama, as Berg, Brahm, Steiger, Wolff and Mauthner all claimed, a distinctively Germanic vision of character which could only be understood in the context of this tradition, had found a new dynamic expression in keeping with the outlook of the late nineteenth century.[38] In these plays, as throughout the development of German literature in the previous century, the artistic imagination had

been impelled (the Naturalists believed) to relate a sense of the uniqueness of the inward world with an opposing awareness of social reality. Within the context of a modern, scientific outlook the Norwegian dramatist had in their view renewed that exploration of the subjective life, that probing of its supreme creative capacities, which was characteristic of their own native drama since the time of Lessing. The Naturalists' sense of the contemporary relevance of Ibsen's work stemmed in no small measure from this awareness of its inherent continuity with a specifically German tradition of drama. This can be seen in the very determination with which they set out to reveal the diverse connections of theme and purpose which linked these revolutionary works with their German predecessors. There was no single play of Ibsen's (as George has shown) in which one or other of the Naturalists did not see the renewal of a preoccupation characteristic of the German drama of the previous hundred years.[39] Underlying all these seemingly disjointed and often superficial examinations one can see a determining desire to propose Ibsen's drama as the climax of a development of imaginative insight which was peculiar to the 'Germanic' drama. His powerful vision of the self-estrangement of the individual in an alien society was widely interpreted by the Naturalists as the renewal of an imaginative preoccupation first expressed in the drama of the Sturm und Drang and progressively negotiated in the plays of Kleist, Hebbel, Ludwig and Anzengruber.[40] A tentative attempt to reveal this continuity of artistic concern is already apparent in Passarge's 'Henrik Ibsen' in 1883, but it was in Berg's 'Henrik Ibsen und das Germanentum in der modernen Literatur' in 1887 that it gained its first full and effective expression.[41]

This whole tendency of enquiry was clearly greatly stimulated by Brandes' forceful demonstration of the essentially individualistic drive of Ibsen's creative imagination,[42] which seemed to German commentators in itself to point to its basic affinity with their national literary tradition. Although it is impossible to gauge the actual extent of Brandes' influence, it is noticeable that almost all subsequent attempts to define the contemporary significance of the Norwegian's dramas - like those of Steiger, Brahm, Schlenther, Litzmann and Hanstein - are governed in one way or another by the sense of its great mediating power - its power to illuminate the traditional values of German literary awareness for the contemporary imagination.

These attempts of the German Naturalists to reveal an essential imaginative continuity between the central tradition of German drama and the work of Ibsen involved more than a concern to establish thematic similarities. It sprang rather from a sense of a controlling affinity of vision which underlay particular insights or preoccupations. The distinctive concern of the German drama with the inward life was widely seen as expressing a primal tendency of the creative imagination which was by no means restricted to the socially critical or realistic drama. This drive to internalise the dramatic action, to lend it a moral intensity which was often quite independent of outward movement, was, they believed, the defining character of many of the greatest achievements of German drama from Lessing to Grillparzer. Over and over again the Naturalists tried to show that plays which seemed to have little in common with each other or with the work of Ibsen, were in fact linked by this shaping concern to grasp the subjective life of the

individual as the essential arena of dramatic development. In the work of Lessing, for instance, Flaischlen and Gartelmann saw the emergence of this characteristic psychological preoccupation which marked a severe shift of interest away from the exigencies of external action.[43] Brahm similarly sought to show the influence of this vision of Lessing's on the development of Goethe as a playwright. This was decisively revealed, Brahm claimed, in his will to reject the loose, episodic structure of 'Götz' and to realise a full dramatic action within a closed circle of intimate relationships.[44] In Goethe's 'Iphigenie auf Tauris' he, like Schlenther, saw this specifically modern concern come to a first fulfilment which anticipated contemporary developments in the drama.[45] In an article in the 'Vossische Zeitung' in 1888 Schlenther for his part sought to reveal what he called the 'latent' or psychological action in Goethe's Seelendrama which seemed so much in keeping with modern aspirations.[46] Some years later in the 'Freie Bühne' he again stressed the peculiar relevance of 'Iphigenie':

> "Wenn innerhalb der fünf Akte mehr erzählt als begangen wird, so führt gerade die Erzählung zu Bekenntnissen und Geständnissen, zu Entdeckungen und Erkennungen so fruchtbarer und rein menschlicher Natur, dass ihnen an dramatischer Wirkung kein blanker Schwertstreich und kein Massenauflauf gleichkommt."[47]

Despite individual differences of outlook and immediate purpose German Naturalists were generally united in a basic desire to see contemporary developments in the context of a national literary evolution. As a group they seemed to doubt any proposal for reform which could not be seen to have its roots in the growth of the drama in the past century. In particular they were almost all concerned

to show that their conceptions of a realistic drama were in basic agreement with the formal criteria laid down by Lessing in his 'Hamburgische Dramaturgie'. In this work, it would seem, they saw a fusion of empirical awareness and specifically Germanic moral concern upon which the critical aspirations of the present could effectively be based. In the first place, it was Lessing, as Kerr characteristically insisted, who first directed the creative mind towards the scrupulous observance of the processes of nature and fully defined a conception of the drama as an image of causal coherence.[48] This was something almost all the Naturalists accepted. They seemed to acknowledge that Lessing had defined the ideas of dramatic necessity and probability in terms supremely appropriate to the understanding of a 'scientific' age.[49] Between the critical sensibility of Lessing and the creative vision of Ibsen there was, they believed, a direct line of development. It was Lessing who in the view of the Naturalists had first envisaged and promoted the development of a genuinely psychological drama - a drama born of an imaginative engagement with the inner life of the individual which was only secondarily concerned with the demands of plot or spectacle. They could identify themselves wholeheartedly with his consistent hostility to the frigid pomp of French court-tragedy and to the extravagant intrigues of Spanish drama, and could see this as evidence of his desire to foster the development of a more intimate national form. This vision of a new inward drama was explicitly announced in their view in his 'Abhandlungen über die Fabel.' His indictment of the insensivity of contemporary critics seemed to the Naturalists to speak out of their own situation:

> "Es hat ihnen nie beifallen wollen, dass auch jeder innere Kampf von Leidenschaften, jede Folge von verschiedenen Gedanken, wo eine die andere aufhebt, eine Handlung sei."

This passage became a prime focus of Naturalist critical preoccupation. Schlenther hailed it triumphantly and Harden subjected it to a full, if more questioning analysis.[50] And, most significant of all, Hauptmann quoted it as the motto of his 'Das Friedensfest' in an attempt to show a deeper conformity in an apparently experimental undertaking.[51]

III

If the underlying impetus of Naturalist theories of the drama was indeed, as I have suggested, to reveal an effective continuity between their reformist purposes and their awareness of a national dramatic tradition, how are we to regard this critical undertaking? To what extent can this assertion of continuity be upheld? Can Naturalist criticism really be said to have made possible a new and valid understanding of the historical development of German drama? And, still more important, did it really, as it claimed, help to elucidate the actual processes of development in which the drama of the 1890's was caught up? There can be no doubt, it seems to me, that Naturalist criticism did contribute something substantial to the understanding of the drama. From their own particular point of view they were able to isolate tendencies of artistic insight which had never before been critically explored and in so doing they helped decisively, I believe, to break down the uniformity of the assumptions which had controlled the discussion of the drama throughout the previous century. After Naturalism the critical

framework within which the drama was considered, was necessarily wider and more flexible. At the same time, however, it seems to me that the most vital achievements of Naturalist criticism were essentially specific and local, arrived at, that is, independently of their wider vision of synthesis which often served only to curtail their powers of critical judgment. This is really the decisive point. The dramatic theories of figures like Berg, Steiger, Schlenther and Brahm were determined by a sense of moral-aesthetic purpose which was neither so close to the critical aspirations of earlier decades as they seemed to believe, nor so fully in touch with the determining impulses of the contemporary imagination as they consistently claimed. Their theories were bound by a search for compromise which allowed many partial insights but which precluded the kind of creative involvement at which they aimed. The pre-occupation of Naturalist critics with the isolated, divided self as the centre of dramatic concern did lead to a fuller understanding of the social drama of the Sturm und Drang as of works like 'Maria Magdalena', 'Der Erbförster' and 'Das vierte Gebot.' But their attempt to lend these plays a central, symptomatic importance in the development of German drama reveals, it seems to me, a basic confusion. It shows a tendency to read imaginative concerns elucidated in the study of social plays into the central tradition of German drama - a tendency characteristically disclosed in Schlenther's attempt to reveal the prophetic significance of Goethe's 'Iphigenie' or Brahm's attempt to elevate the importance of his 'Clavigo' or, more explicitly, in Gartelmann's concern to show a governing preoccupation with character as the distinctive feature of Lessing's dramatic theory. Certainly it was possible to argue with some justification that in many plays from 'Minna von Barnhelm' to

'Maria Stuart' and 'Das goldene Vliess' that the primary concern of the dramatist was no longer with plot but with infra-personal tensions - that the creative imagination was indeed characterised by a new "inwardness". But this argument was not enough in itself; it needed to be qualified (although it never to my knowledge really was) by the more important realisation that the conception of these works was still governed by a sense of the centrality of the moral self which the Naturalists could no longer accept. This is something which must be stressed. All of these dramas embodied a conception of an action which (in keeping with Aristotelian categories) took place in and through the being of agents. It was clearly possible to see the essential dramatic process in these works as taking place in the subjective consciousness of the characters, but this inward process is itself conceived as the focus of a moral order which encompasses the total imaginative world of the play.[52] What the Naturalists failed fully to acknowledge was that these works did not grow out of that vision of personal estrangement which underlay the conception of the social dramas of Lenz and Wagner, Gutzkow and Hebbel. Here the inward world of the subjective self was not opposed (as in these social plays) to an outer sphere of impersonal causality; it appears rather as the centre of a total, organic order in which every aspect, inner and outer, of the dramatic world is harmoniously integrated. The consistent attempts of the Naturalists to relate Ibsen's plays to inherited conceptions of the drama reveals, I believe, a severe bias which limited their understanding of his achievement. The intensity of their concern to show that the structure of these works was indeed compatible with established views of the dramatic as a dynamic, progressive form, seems generally

to have blinded them to the fact that in plays like 'An Enemy of the People', 'Ghosts', 'Rosmersholm' and 'The Wild Duck' (the works with which they were most fully concerned) the inward development of the protagonist acquires a radically new imaginative significance. The moral consciousness of the individual is here no longer apprehended as the supreme focus of a whole moral universe, but as a source of aspiration which is in tension with the empirical world and which can claim no sanction beyond the confines of the personal life. As Rosmer says to Rebekka at the moment of ultimate temptation: "There is no judge over us. And therefore we must see to it that we judge ourselves."[53] In Ibsen's dramas the inner world of the character in which the primary dramatic development takes place, is set at odds with an enclosing sphere of social-genetic processes to which his life is finally subject. The compelling will of the individual to understand and direct his existence, is thus apprehended within the context of his dependence upon impersonal forces against which his rational mind constantly rebels, but over which he has no final control. The militant affirmation of freedom and truth on the part of a Mrs. Alving, a Rosmer or a Stockmann is not a moral act in which the character of a whole dramatic universe is illumined, but a conscious gesture of defiance made in the face of a world which negates man's sense of meaning. It was a strong sense of this disjunction between an inner sphere of the self and an outer realm of circumstance which led conservative critics like Spielhagen and Frenzel to speak of the "epic" tendency of Ibsen's creative vision.[54] And in fact it was not difficult to establish a basic connection between this radical awareness of an opposition between self and world and the conception of personal

estrangement which had dominated thinking on the novel since the time of Hegel. But it would also have been possible to dispute the orthodoxy of Ibsen's dramas from a different and (to my mind) more interesting point of view. One could have shown that these works were open to precisely those objections which Freytag and Vischer levelled against Greek tragedy.[55] For the structure of these modern works was also finally incompatible with that criterion of strict, self-sufficient coherence which had been defined in the 'Hamburgische Dramaturgie' and had been accepted throughout the nineteenth century as the defining character of the dramatic form. Here too, one could have argued, the purposes and acts of men lack final determining significance because they are susceptible to the overwhelming might of influences from beyond the personal sphere; here too the developing structure of human purposes does not constitute a total, closed process of dramatic causation. In this mode of drama in which attention is directed beyond the agents towards an enveloping situation, as Otto Ludwig reflected in a study probably stimulated by a reading of 'Maria Magdalena', there is no possibility of realising a full inward development of character and therefore no possibility of effecting a real congruity between inner life and outer action.[56]

But if Ibsen's social drama involved a sharper break with earlier conceptions of the dramatic than the Naturalists generally supposed, its relations with the decisive developments of the drama in the eighteen-nineties were also more problematic than they were inclined to believe. The conception of inner crisis which they saw as the energising centre of his analytical form and which they sought to relate to an evolving tradition of German drama, could not

serve as the model for contemporary developments as they sought to propose. Although the plays of Hauptmann, Halbe, Schlaf and Wedekind were characterised by a common preoccupation with inward dilemma which seemed to the Naturalists to proclaim Ibsen's determining influence, these works were not conceived in terms of progressive moral conflict such as that which sustained the Ibsenist structure. The form of plays like 'Jugend', 'Das Friedensfest' or 'Fuhrmann Henschel' was governed (as I hope to show) by a vision of compulsions which are largely beyond the reach of the subjective understanding of the individual and from which his conscious experience is radically dissociated. This represents an important shift of imaginative insight which, as far as I can see, the Naturalists did not generally adequately acknowledge. For instance, the tendency of Naturalist critics to see Hauptmann's work as a continuation of Ibsen's dramatic initiative often reveals a certain insensitivity to the creative originality of the younger playwright, in particular to his radically new conception of dramatic action. In his domestic tragedies Hauptmann apprehends a process of inner breakdown which cannot be simply and directly related to the development of outer events or to the logical progression of an inward crisis.[57] Between this conception of inward crisis and that in Ibsen's drama there is, I believe, a genuine rift. The form of Ibsen's analytical plays which the Naturalists regarded as the directing achievement of the modern drama, presupposed the purposive energy of a consciously striving, moral self capable of inspecting and to some extent of choosing between rival possibilities of commitment. This type of severe inner conflict and the progressively formulated tension which is its structural expression,

is foreign to the dramatic vision of Hauptmann and also, we may add, to that of Halbe and Schnitzler, Wedekind and Schlaf. None of these dramatists could simply adopt or easily modify the structure of Ibsen's drama. They were all in their different ways driven to conceive new formal possibilities.

Naturalist critics were not, I believe, consistently or fully aware of the nature of these and other more experimental aspirations. Martini has shown the severe limitations of Brahm's appreciation of Büchner and Grabbe.[58] This seems to me to be symptomatic of restrictions in the critical understanding of German Naturalism as a whole. If we look, for instance, at the responses of these critics to the plays of Hauptmann, we cannot but be impressed by the frequency with which they expressed doubts and reservations. This is all the more striking since the Naturalists were often inclined to hold up his work as a vindication of the reformist movement as a whole, and we can only assume that such expressions of misgiving were consistently understated or even in some cases suppressed. These indications of unease point, I believe, to a lack of full critical appreciation of Hauptmann's dramatic aims. This is clearly revealed in a largely unacknowledged tension which pervades many Naturalist discussions of his work. On the one hand, even Hauptmann's closest supporters like Brahm and Schlenther were clearly disturbed by the extent to which he had attempted to go beyond the compressed, allusive realism of Ibsen's plays and make the drama the mirror of the everyday world. In this concern to attend to the minute details of a particular situation they, like Kerr, Harden and others, saw a tendency of insight which was often at odds with the necessarily tense, selective vision of the genuine

dramatist.[59] At the same time, however, most Naturalists attempted wholeheartedly to defend the authenticity of the view of life expressed in Hauptmann's plays, both on the grounds that it was substantially true to actual experience and that it was also potentially compatible with the primary requirements of the drama as an artistic form.[60] This characteristic tension reveals, it seems to me, a misunderstanding of the essential originality of his dramatic purpose. It reveals a tendency to regard his work in the light of that fine balance of impulses which they saw supremely achieved in Ibsen's social plays, without fully considering the degree to which his distinctive insight into the exposure and isolation of the individual demanded new means of dramatic expression - means at once more oblique, differentiated and altogether more tentative. This insight could only be realised by means of a painstaking exploration of the manifold dependency of the individual, of the various pressures converging upon him and of his semi-voluntary, half-articulate and partially inconsistent responses to them. This was a mimetic purpose of a quite new scope and complexity which could not be accommodated to the Ibsenite structure without totally disrupting its distinctive character.

In this discussion of Naturalist dramatic theory I have laid considerable weight upon their efforts to come to terms with an awareness of a great dramaturgical inheritance. The force and significance of this strong retrospective tendency in their critical explorations have generally been greatly underestimated. Although this tendency brought with it (as I have tried to show) a severe bias in their critical sympathies and a confused estimate of the

historical situation of the contemporary drama as a whole, it is none the less a very important element in the self-awareness of the German Naturalists and it deserves a much fuller recognition than it has yet received. When we come to consider the critical aims and theories of Naturalism, we do well to recall the words of Brahm which spring, I am convinced, from the deepest aspirations of the movement as a whole:

> "Auf Überlieferung beruht alle Kultur; und wollte jedes Zeitalter anfangen, ganz aus sich heraus von neuem zu bauen, wir würden lauter einstöckige Häuser nur haben. Die lebendige Tradition von der erstarrten zu scheiden, das allein ist die Aufgabe; was leere Schablone geworden, was uns drückt als totes Ideal, muss fallen; aber nicht zu denken ist die Zeit wo Goethes, wo Schillers Bestes stirbt."[61]

## (2) Poverty and Experience in Naturalist Drama

The Naturalists were distinguished from all earlier literary groups by the fact that they were consciously committed to an interest in lower-class life. They had grown up in a society which was being rapidly and irrecoverably changed by the effects of industrialisation. They had all witnessed from their various points of view the mass movement of workers from rural areas to the big cities and had seen the squalor and misery attendant on this great social upheaval.[1] It was this great change and its inevitable repercussions which more than anything else marked the life of German society in the sixties and seventies. It resulted, as Hamann and Hermand have shown, in the emergence of a whole new class of urban industrial workers and led to the formation of new political groups and alliances and thus eventually to a basic shift in the structures of national political life.[2] The most significant index of this changing situation was Bismarck's Sozialistengesetz of 1878 which was long to remain a focus of controversy and confusion.[3]

The young generation of writers in the 1880's were acutely conscious that this decisive process of social change and its far-reaching effects on contemporary life and thought had never found adequate representation in imaginative literature. They were convinced, as the Young Germans had been half a century before, that the preoccupations of writers and the standards by which literature was judged, had become fixed in a way which no longer allowed a vital, challenging engagement with actual, everyday experience. In particular, they were aware that whole areas of social life had never really been artistically explored at all. In 1884, for example the

Hart Brothers attempted in their 'Kritische Waffengänge' to reveal what they saw as the characteristic failure of Spielhagen as a novelist to reflect contemporary social experience. This failure they saw as stemming largely from the old-world narrowness of the novelist's interests. Spielhagen, they claimed, had been unable to relate the fate of the families who were at the centre of attention in his novels to corporate existence as a whole, or indeed to see the vaster world which extended far beyond the sphere of these aristocratic or upper-middle-class lives. There is in his world, they declared, no collective misery, no great shared degradation.[4]

This criticism was symptomatic of much written in this period. It crystallised a kind of feeling which was to be articulated with increasing clarity and vehemence throughout the later years of the decade and which is perhaps most clearly revealed in the numerous discussions of Zola's novels. What is most striking about these discussions is the tendency of German critics to assert the great liberating significance of his work, without at the same time endorsing the particular character of his artistic vision or his technical methods as a novelist. It was not so much his particular interpretation of life which they saw as important, as the quality and impetus of his imagination: his passionate concern to observe with scrupulous care whole aspects of personal and social existence which had generally been seen as unworthy of artistic interest.[5] However widely these younger German commentators differed in their critical assessments of Zola's work, they all seemed to see in it an emphatic confirmation of their growing conviction that the contemporary writer had to go beyond the limited preoccupations of his predecessors, if he were to really grasp the

character of life in contemporary society.

Naturalist drama in Germany, however, shows surprisingly little sign of this profoundly held conviction that the artist is called to explore with equal intensity every area of social existence. Although they were, as Alberti claimed, intellectually and aesthetically committed to an interest in working-class life,[6] Naturalist playwrights generally showed considerable reluctance to venture beyond the known and accepted sphere of middle-class existence. It is also noticeable that in all the many discussions of the drama in the late eighties and nineties, there is next to no detailed consideration of the peculiar formal and technical problems involved in the presentation of deprived, inarticulate characters on stage. No, if one surveys the development of Naturalist drama as a whole, it is at once apparent that it is the intellectual and the artist who are consistently at the centre of attention.[7] There are relatively very few works which have as their protagonists, in Weigand's phrase, "die kleinen Leute, die im engen Horizont der Armut leben."[8]

This is not to say, however, that Naturalist plays seldom showed any interest in the poor and the deprived. There were quite a number of works which sought to represent, and sometimes with considerable immediacy, aspects of working-class life and experience. Some, like Anzengruber's 'Ein Faustschlag', Wildenbruch's 'Die Haubenlerche', or in a slightly different way, Fulda's 'Das verlorene Paradies', tried to portray the development of a love-relationship between one figure of working-class background and another who comes from a freer world outside.[9] Others, like Halbe's 'Eisgang', Hirschfeld's 'Die Mutter' or even Sudermann's 'Sodoms Ende', sought to explore the attempts of a middle-class

protagonist to come to terms with an oppressive awareness of social disunity and injustice.[10] In all of these works lower-class figures appear and in some, notably in 'Die Mütter', the dramatist has gone to considerable lengths to reveal the effects of an insecure and brutal existence upon the emotional life of a deprived individual. But even when such an investigation of working-class attitudes is undertaken, it is not generally at the real centre of dramatic preoccupation; it is in almost every case subordinated to the perception of a different and more conventional kind of crisis.

In this chapter I would like to look at four of the few significant Naturalist dramas which attempted to investigate in detail the bondage of the individual to his economic circumstances and to realise this dependent existence in dramatic terms. Even in these works, we must note, the dramatist is not always wholly concerned with those characters who are seen as the victims of their environment. In Hauptmann's 'Vor Sonnenaufgang' and Sudermann's 'Die Ehre' which startled audiences in 1889 by the boldness and explicitness of their determinist assumptions, the dramatist is also intent upon portraying the development of relationships which cannot be seen as determined by environmental pressures. In 'Die Familie Selicke' by Holz and Schlaf and in Hauptmann's 'Die Weber', on the other hand, the dramatic crisis is played out completely within the confines of an imprisoning milieu and affects the lives of all the individuals who are bound together by it. In these works the dramatist (albeit in very different ways) is making a revolutionary attempt to see the presuppositions of the dramatic development as inherent in the tensions of a determining situation, to conceive the action, that is, as the logical unfolding of environmental pressures.

II

In 'Die Ehre' the moral failure of both families, the Heineckes in the Hinterhaus and the Mühlingks, their employers, in the Vorderhaus, is elucidated largely through the protest of a figure who in each case is a member of the family, but who is in outlook irreparably cut off from it. It is almost completely through the eyes of Robert, returning after nearly ten years in the Far East, that we come to see the full corruption of the Heinecke family; likewise although to a lesser extent, it is the unflinching dissent of Lenore which in the end forces us to realise that life in the more sophisticated and admired Mühlingk family is just as degraded in its own way. In the course of the play each of these figures comes to understand the nature of the others' estrangement from his family, and to realise that the failures they both condemn are the inescapable consequence of the mutually destructive relationship which exists between their two houses. It is, however, Robert's growing understanding of the situation which is the primary focus of attention throughout the play. In all his years abroad in Mühlingk's service he seems to have been quite untroubled by the fact that the home he was brought up in, the labour by which his family was maintained, his own education and training, are all gifts on the part of the employer - gifts freely made as compensation for an injury which his father received at a factory celebration.[11] He has apparently never had occasion to reflect on the fact that Mühlingk was under no legal obligation to make such restitution or to question just what such acts of gratuitous charity involve. As far as we can judge, he has always accepted his employer's patronage with

unreserved gratitude and regarded it as wholly beneficial (pp.34f.; 70). It is his gradual, bewildered realisation that most of the luxuries in his parents' home are presents made by Kurt Mühlingk, in return for their acceptance of his relationship with Alma, Robert's younger sister, that destroys his unthinking confidence. He is overwhelmed both by the realisation that Kurt, the son of his revered employer, should regard his sister as an object which can be bought, and that his parents should have been so happy to accept such payment (pp.83; 85ff.; 117ff.). Under the impact of this great two-fold shock his whole sense of the ties which bind the two families, is thrown into confusion. In the end he is forced to see that the relationship of his family to their employer is not one of creative partnership as he had thought; that it in fact involves a dependence on their part which is so total and so irreversible as to preclude any possibility of real participation. They are, he now realises, people without rights and therefore without security. To survive at all they are driven relentlessly to sell everything they have - their work, their daughters and even their self-respect (pp.120ff.; 124). The crowning irony of this, as Robert points out in his last confrontation with Mühlingk, is that in thus selling themselves continuously to their employers, they succeed only in bringing back a little of the wealth they have themselves created for him (pp.157f.).

In the course of the play Lenore gains an understanding of the relationship between the two families which confirms and complements this developing recognition of Robert's. Here too it is the realisation of her brother's readiness to abuse the credulity and vanity of Alma, which clinches her awareness of a driving egotism in

her family and her class, an egotism grounded in a feeling of economic power. The assumption underlying their whole attitude to life, she comes to see, is that everything can be bought; that honour, justice and love are automatically available to the wealthy (pp.138; 159). As Robert gains an understanding of the degradation of those who are denied all power of choice because they have no rights, so Lenore comes to understand the corruption of those who wield limitless power because their wealth gives them unquestioned control over other men's lives.

These coinciding statements of condemnation form the polemical climax of 'Die Ehre'. The exposure of the destructive relationship which exists between the two families, clearly entails a radical critique of the social order by which this relationship is upheld - an order which, as it appears here, is determined solely by the self-interested exercise of economic power. Indeed the analysis of this relationship seems to imply nothing less than an indictment of the whole capitalist system. I say "seems to" because such far-reaching questions remain completely beyond the dramatist's explicit concern. He shows no interest at all in the wider issues raised by his analysis of life in the two families. His real preoccupations remain much more limited and much more conventional. He is in fact almost completely taken up with showing the effects of the situation on the love which exists between Robert and Lenore and draws them together despite all the impediments in their way. The plot of the play is designed to articulate the developing conflict between this pure emotional drive and the forces, within and without the self, which tend to thwart or distort it. For this love, as the dramatist portrays it, is endangered not just by the social gulf

fixed between the two young people, by the incomprehension of both sets of parents and the ferocious opposition of the Mühlingks; it is also, and more seriously, threatened by Robert's stubborn adherence to notions of decency and honour assimilated in his formative years in a middle-class milieu, or, to be more specific, by his stubborn attempts to apply these notions to the actual circumstances by which he is confronted.

This inner confusion of Robert's is focussed in his obsessive desire to repair his family's standing by fighting a duel with Kurt (pp.133f.). This, as Trast tries to make clear to him, is simply incompatible with his love for Lenore (p.134). And even though he does finally accept his friend's view that the only kind of honour that counts is inward and has nothing to do with reputation, he cannot free himself from the standards of the middle-class code by which he has come, unknown to himself, to measure his worth as a man. Right till the end of the play his love is threatened by this compelling dependence upon norms of behaviour which he knows have no real root in his emotional life.

Sudermann has clearly aimed to link the development of this outward action as closely as possible with the progressive elucidation of the state of affairs in the two households. He was attempting to present the opposition between Robert and Kurt as the focus of tensions which have long existed between the two families, while at the same time using it to provide the play with a strong, forward-moving impetus. This deepening hostility was to form a line of development strong enough to carry the different discussions necessitated by his expository purpose, while in itself directly expressing the operation of powerful social pressures. It seems to

me, however, that Sudermann, like so many dramatists before him, has not really succeeded in integrating these two aspects of his dramatic statement. He seems to have lacked the technical skill, the powers of judgment and, quite simply, the singlemindedness necessary to achieve this delicate fusion. He was so intent upon manipulating this process of conflict, upon intensifying it artificially for theatrical ends, that he finally almost completely deprives it of real demonstrative force.

This arbitrary desire to heighten tension is already apparent towards the end of the first act. Here it becomes clear that Trast has already met Alma and clashed with Kurt without having any idea who they are (pp.44f.; 50). This encounter is clearly calculated to sharpen the antagonism between the two men and to make the possibility of reconciliation even at this stage that much more remote. The dramatist, however, fails completely to convince us of the necessity or even probability of this chance encounter. He seems rather to be intruding upon the situation which he has defined, in an arbitrary attempt to lend it a new urgency.

This same concern to heighten suspense is still more marked in the later stages of the dramatic action. In the last two acts the dangers of the situation are greatly increased by the fact that Robert, in what Trast describes as a highly excitable state, has got hold of a gun (pp.126 and 140). Now this, as I see it, has the effect of bringing about an important shift in the presentation of the action. It becomes more and more clear in the last act of the play that the really decisive question is no longer whether Robert can be saved from his self-destructive delusion by the influence of Lenore and Trast; but whether they will be on hand to intervene at

the crucial moment when Robert's self-control finally snaps. What is now of primary significance, in other words, is the timing of events; everything now appears to depend upon the actual moment when the two male figures will come into open collision and upon where those figures who can avert disaster happen to be at that specific instant. In the end it is in fact only the timely appearance of Lenore which prevents Robert from carrying out what might well have been a lethal attack upon her brother (pp.156f.).

This uncertainty in the conception of the dramatic development is closely bound up with a failure of a different kind which, if anything, is still more fundamental. Although the dramatist has generally succeeded in revealing the pressure of conditioned aims and prejudices in the responses of the different characters, he has in my view completely failed in the much more demanding task of establishing the figure of Lenore as someone who is unaffected by such constraints.[12] He has not been able to suggest anything of those inner resources which enable her to see through the false pretensions which have surrounded her from birth, and to live completely at one with her deepest emotional impulses. Sudermann's strangely perfunctory presentation of the character suggests that he did not really see the peculiar difficulties by which he was faced. For if we consider the basic assumption underlying the conception of the figure of Lenore, it is clear that a quite abnormal emotional strength is attributed to her. She is portrayed as a girl, probably still in her early twenties, who has preserved her love for someone she has not seen for ten years in the face of the opposition of all those around her. Sudermann, however, does not seem to have appreciated the full enormity of this

assumption or paused to consider just how much skill and tact would be necessary to make this character convincing. Lenore remains a singularly pale and remote figure who does not even seem to have engaged his real creative interest.

Yet whether Sudermann recognises it or not, his polemic purpose stands or falls with the persuasiveness of his heroine. For it is she, whose emotional life is so directly at odds with her environment and who stands to lose everything, who must vindicate his primary conviction that the individual who is at one with his own deepest emotional energies, can resist the corrupting pressure of social forces.

'Die Ehre' for all its enormous theatrical success, we must conclude, is a work of calculated compromise. Although he seems to propose a severe critique of the capitalist system, Sudermann seems equally intent upon putting forward a dramatic development calculated to confound the seriousness of the issues raised in the course of this indictment. When Robert, who has suddenly been made heir to Trast's immense fortune, leaves with his bride and his benefactor for the South Seas, all the anguish of those still trapped in a cynical, unjust and brutal society is successfully forgotten. All the hopelessness and depravity which the dramatist has brought to light are eclipsed in a casual theatrical cliché which has no real connection with what has gone before.

'Vor Sonnenaufgang', although a work of much greater power than 'Die Ehre', is a play similarly afflicted by a basic inconsistency of purpose. Here, even more clearly than in Sudermann's drama, the action seems to fall into two clearly

separable parts or phases, in which the main figures seem to fulfil noticeably separate functions. Here too the young playwright appears to have been unable to relate a seemingly conventional notion of intrigue to his expository scheme. It is worth looking closely at these tensions in the conception of 'Vor Sonnenaufgang'. If we can observe these closely and see how they arise, we will be in a much better position to assess the character of this Hauptmann's first play and consider its position in the development of his work as a whole.

It is obvious from the beginning that the dramatist is concerned to place the situation in the Krause household within the context of a great upheaval affecting the life of a whole district of Silesia in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Loth, the central figure, is deeply conscious of this social crisis and has been drawn here to study its effects on that section of the community whose existence seems to have changed most drastically - the men who work in the recently opened mines.[13] When he comes to the Krause household, primarily to get permission to visit the mines, he comes face to face with a group of people whose lives have changed just as abruptly and with perhaps even more disastrous results. This is something we learn about largely through the developing experience of Loth himself. As he comes to understand more and more about this family which has been made rich by the discovery of coal, so our understanding of the whole situation also develops. This is an aspect of the social crisis of which he knows little and about which he has few preconceptions, and it is largely through his attempts to understand what has happened that we are drawn to see the sociological importance of the great change which has taken place in the

life of the peasant families of this region. He continually questions what he sees and in discussion with other figures tries to fit together his single observations into a fuller, more coherent picture. Through his different conversations with Helene, Hoffmann, Beibst and finally Schimmelpfennig he comes more and more to see that the depravity facing him in the Krause household is typical of most of the landowning families in the district, who have been similarly thrust into undreamt of wealth and leisure.[14] The clinching summary of Schimmelpfennig in the last act only serves to confirm his own increasingly pessimistic conclusions:

> "Suff! Völlerei, Inzucht und infolge davon -
> Degeneration auf der ganzen Linie" (pp.88).

Loth's social concern, however, involves more than just an attempt to understand the causes of change in collective existence. He is always intent on seeing prevailing conditions not just as an end but also as a beginning, as the foundations of a world which is coming into being. His whole outlook is conditioned by the belief that each development in corporate life, and indeed many personal decisions, must have important consequences in the future (pp.34f.; 46ff.; 63f.). In combatting social and moral evils he is conscious that it is not he or his contemporaries who will reap the benefit of change but those who follow after. With the exception of Schimmelpfennig who appears relatively briefly and mostly towards the end of the play, Loth is the only figure who attempts to see the immediate situation in this broader perspective. It is largely through him that the spectator is drawn to consider this particular social crisis in historical terms and to speculate about its implications for the development of society as a whole. This is

not to say that we are bound to accept Loth's standards of value or even his general views of social evolution; these are always presented as part of the outlook of one single and deeply committed individual. None the less the greater range of his vision, his sense of the unbreakable continuity of life does serve to establish a historical perspective, in which the dramatic action must finally be placed. It forces us to consider the greater consequences of this invading process of industrialisation and to ask (with him) what its ultimate effects on the socio-economic life of future generations must be.

From this point of view the figure of Loth appears as a source of guiding intellectual awareness. His growing understanding of the situation stimulates and, to a considerable extent, directs our own understanding. In this respect the figure's function is clearly expository; Loth appears as someone who is sufficiently detached from what takes place around him to see it in its broader social context and to grasp its wider significance.

At the same time, however, it is immediately obvious that Loth is also involved with the events taking place in the Krause household in quite a different way. Although his understanding of the general situation is more profound and consistent than that of any of the other characters, he is conspicuously ignorant of certain vital facts about this family which confronts him. These are gradually revealed to the audience without his knowledge, behind his back, as it were. Now, it is not in itself improbable that the Krauses should try to hide some things from the newcomer. Hoffmann has every reason to hide the fact that he is intent on seducing Helene (pp.56f.), just as Frau Krause has every reason to

hide her liaison with Kahl, her prospective son-in-law (pp.51f.). Nor is it surprising that Helene, who is so desperately keen to impress Loth, should be so concerned not to let him suspect that her father and her sister are dipsomaniacs (pp.25; 39ff.; 53f.). None the less these are just the things which he needs to know if he is to see the family for what it is and adapt his relationships with it accordingly. And this is the decisive point. If he were in possession of these facts, his interest in Helene, we cannot doubt, would be nothing more than clinical. Given his completely obsessive fear of passing on some genetic impurity to his descendants, it is inconceivable that in these circumstances he would have allowed himself to form any sexual relationship with her. His attachment to her develops as it does, only because he is totally deceived about her background.

This points to what is in my view a basic structural weakness in 'Vor Sonnenaufgang'. The dramatist fails to show the necessity of this crucial ignorance of Loth's. Indeed, he does not seem to make any particular effort to do so. He seems intent rather upon suggesting just how fragile this ignorance is and how easily it could be destroyed by a chance word or event. It is, in other words, the uncertainty of the situation which the dramatist is concerned to stress and to exploit as a source of vital dramatic tension.[15] As we see Loth's love for Helene develop, so we see him hover the more precariously on the brink of recognition. At the end of the first act it is already made fairly clear to the audience that the helplessly intoxicated old man Loth has seen in the inn is none other than Helene's father. Kahl actually says as much at the dinner table and in so doing produces such a commotion that the meal comes to an abrupt end (pp.37f.). Loth, however, although

perplexed, remains completely unsuspecting.

If we still have any doubt about the identity of the drunkard, it is immediately dispelled at the beginning of the second act. Here we see Helene rush out of the house and attempt to drag her staggering, singing father indoors (pp.39ff.). The noise which has awoken Helene, however, does not attract Loth, nor do her subsequent shrieks for help in the face of her father's drunken assaults. Yet he is clearly up and about, for he appears fully dressed just a few seconds later completely unaware of what has been happening (p.41).

Even after Helene and Loth have confessed their love for one another, he remains just as ignorant of the true state of affairs. From this point on the dramatist seems to become even more determined to stress the precariousness of his hero's ignorance. In the first place Helene draws him to admit that if it ever came to a real conflict he would not hesitate to sacrifice his love to his sense of duty (pp.79f.). Then, soon afterwards, he begins to ask her, apparently quite casually, about the state of her parents' health, and just when she seems on the point of bracing herself for a confession, she is interrupted by the sudden arrival of Frau Spiller (p.80).

This tension is maintained throughout the final act. In Loth's long and frequently interrupted conversation with Dr. Schimmelpfennig the possibility of discovery is always conspicuously near at hand (pp.83ff.). The doctor is the one character in the play who knows the consuming force of Loth's moral convictions, and who at the same time shares some of his dogmatic intensity. It is clear that if Schimmelpfennig does see any sign of Loth's infatuation, he will at once grasp what is afoot and not hesitate to tell his

friend the truth. The issue, however, remains in doubt until Helene has actually persuaded Loth that they should leave immediately after her sister's baby is born (p.89). Only now, after watching Loth closely and after actually catching a glimpse of him and Helene together, does Schimmelpfennig finally come alive to the situation and decide to tell his friend about conditions in the Krause household (pp.92ff.). Once Loth has grasped the truth of what the doctor has told him, he leaves the house at once without any visible sign of hesitation or regret (pp.95f.).

In 'Vor Sonnenaufgang' (as in 'Die Ehre') the dramatist, we must conclude, has not succeeded in integrating a growing preoccupation with specific, changing relationships with his broader analytical concern. In Hauptmann's work indeed the disparity between plot-development and social diagnosis is so serious and so disruptive that it would seem to reveal some fundamental tension in the conception of the work itself. Part of the trouble clearly stems from the fact that the dramatist is trying to relate perceptions of two quite separate crises which are different in kind and have only tenuous links with one another. On the one hand, he is concerned to observe a critical phase in the life of the Krause household which is focussed in the general apprehension with which they await the birth of Helene's sister's child. On the other, he wants to portray the crisis which is precipitated in the life of Loth, when for the first time strong sexual feelings come into conflict with his directing sense of moral idealism. The dramatist's failure to devise a mode of development encompassing these two separate preoccupations can be seen in the fact that each imposes its own noticeably different demands on the presentation of Loth, the central figure. He seems

forced, in other words, into playing two quite different, indeed at times, clearly incongruous rôles. As an observer of the social scene he appears as a sensitive and far-sighted individual whose statements often seem to acquire a near-choric authority. In his dealings with the Krauses, on the other hand, he seems remarkably imperceptive and at times downright obtuse. In this we can see the fundamental difficulty by which Hauptmann was faced in his portrayal of the figure. He was concerned to show that with a character of such ferocious commitment a crisis of this kind could only be brought about by his consistent misunderstanding of the circumstances in which he is caught up; but his very attempt to emphasize Loth's misunderstanding and to use it as a source of vital dramatic tension, necessarily involved a serious lessening of the dramatic standing of the figure. At times indeed he comes perilously close to reducing him to the status of a ridiculed comic victim.

But there is a further complication here which is probably just as important although much more difficult to pin down. Putting it abruptly and with deceptive simplicity, it seems to me that in the course of the play the dramatist's apprehension of the figure of Helene becomes so intense and so involving that it can no longer fulfil its essentially subordinate rôle in the enactment of the two crises which are at the centre of dramatic concern. This figure, as I see it, increasingly establishes itself as a focus of interest in its own right and in so doing disrupts the terms of the dramatist's presentation of the other characters. For in his apprehension of Helene he explores modes of experience, possibilities of personal encounter and self-realisation, which not only find no echo in his portrayal of other relationships, but which seem in fact

fundamentally inconsistent with the way these relationships are conceived. She is seen with increasing clarity as a being impelled by an emotional energy so intense, haunted by a fear of abandonment so consuming, that her existence seems to be quite separate from that of the other members of her family. The force of her longing for love and of her consequent commitment to Loth is something which, we must suppose, is quite beyond the range of their experience. Even Loth himself who is deeply and genuinely affected by the intensity of her devotion, does not grasp its full, potentially destructive force. She alone is possessed by the sure realisation that if she is deserted, she will be destroyed.[16] The sheer tragic momentum of this experience of Helene's is such that it tends to overshadow those questions which are in the forefront of attention in the early part of the play. The possibility that she might have fallen prey to the advances of Hoffmann if Loth had not appeared on the scene, or that she would have sought surrogate fulfilment in alcohol which looms large in the opening acts, seems (as far as I can see) to become more and more irrelevant as the real character of her experience is made clear. If this is indeed so, then it is clear that there has been some shift in the nature of the dramatist's controlling preoccupation. In these later stages of the action he is increasingly concerned to show the shaping force of an innate, irrational drive which cannot be fully accounted for in terms of genetic make-up or environmental constraint. And once the impetus of this mysterious energy has been revealed, our whole awareness of the dramatic process is necessarily transformed. The apparently unquestioned authority of the positivistic vision is here thrown into doubt. We are now faced not by one irrefragable view of human

behaviour but by two conflicting views which we must try to relate to one another. We are forced to ask in what way the destruction of Helene can be compared to the slower but no less irresistible destruction of her father and sister; to consider how the operation of these infra-personal energies which shape her experience are related to the working of the impersonal determinants which are seen as completely governing their existence and which, we must assume, also influence in some way her own behaviour.

Although the development of the action in 'Vor Sonnenaufgang' forces these fundamental questions upon us, they are not fully confronted in the drama itself. It is as if in the writing of the play the dramatist had been brought face to face with disturbing recognitions which lay beyond the scope of his conscious intentions. But however this may be, the questions raised in this first play were to determine the conception of all his later family tragedies. In 'Das Friedensfest' and 'Einsame Menschen', for instance, he undertook to explore in detail the working of unitive drives which are seen both to precede environmental influences and to be decisively affected by them. In 'Die Weber', on the other hand, he went on to illumine the experience of a group of people whose very existence (like that of the Krauses) seems to be wholly determined by economic processes.

III

In comparison with both 'Vor Sonnenaufgang' and 'Die Ehre' 'Die Familie Selicke' (1890) by Holz and Schlaf is a much more consistently experimental play. Osborne has recently shown how much their work together on sketches and stories served as a

rigorous preparation for their work as dramatists.[17] And it may well be that the inconsistencies of style and form apparent in these two early Naturalist plays helped them to see more clearly just what the notion of a realistic drama actually involved. But however this may be, it is quite clear that they had thought deeply about the character and implications of realism in the drama and had a much clearer conception than either Hauptmann or Sudermann of what they were trying to achieve. To judge by the various, and by no means systematic, statements of Holz, it would seem that their hopes of renewing the drama were inspired by the belief that they could create a completely new kind of dialogue.[18] He and his partner were convinced that the individual's speech reflects his consciousness much more fully and subtly than any other aspect of his behaviour. This was something which, they believed, no dramatist (not even the so-called realists) had yet taken into account.[19] It is not, Holz declares, in his deliberate acts or fully formed thoughts that the real, the hidden, self is revealed; this is only disclosed obliquely and gradually in the individual's unceasing and usually quite unremarkable attempts to comprehend and articulate his experience. This is something of considerable importance. The distinctive concern of Holz and Schlaf to make the language of the drama the mirror of everyday speech was not in the end shaped by any mechanical veristic aim but by the belief that such casual and intimate conversation was laden with psychological significance: that it was in fact the most sensitive and incisive means by which the drama as a personative form could illuminate the recesses of the individual consciousness.[20] This belief is apparent in Holz's seemingly absurd claim that it was only a language which was true to

the disjointed, vague and often evasive character of everyday speech which could give life to the whole self in a way which had never been attempted before.[21] For this speech, as Holz sees it, is significant not primarily through what it explicitly conveys but through what it can reveal and suggest indirectly. By scrupulously noting the barely perceptible shifts, tensions and uncertainties in the responses of the individual character, the dramatist could, Holz believed, look beneath the surface of his consciousness; by such close and undeviating observation he could reveal aspirations or inhibitions of which the individual himself was not fully aware or which he was perhaps even intent upon hiding from himself.[22]

Now this whole theory of what Holz calls "indirect characterisation" postulates the existence of the dramatist only as a dispassionate, all-seeing observer. The dramatist, he assumes, notes the single manifestations of the character's behaviour with infinite care but he does not give any interpretation of it or pass any judgment upon it. This is something, in Holz's view, which only the spectator can do. He must attend carefully to all these various indications which reveal the lives of the characters before him - characters who do not fully understand their own motives and have little real insight into those of the other individuals around them. The spectator alone can note all these single indications and try to bring them into agreement with one another. Holz presupposes that the demands which the drama makes upon the spectator are substantially the same as those which any experience in actual life must make upon him. In both cases he is faced by impressions which are sometimes ambiguous and confusing but which he must none the less try to order and evaluate for himself as best he can.

I have spent some time looking at the implications of this radical theory of realism because I think it can help us greatly to understand the aims of Holz and Schlaf and to see more clearly the position of 'Die Familie Selicke' in the development of Naturalist drama. But beyond this it can also help us, I think, to grasp certain inconsistencies in the play itself which are otherwise very difficult to pin down.

In the first two acts of 'Die Familie Selicke' we see the reactions of the different characters in great detail, but we have no clear understanding of the situation in which they are all involved. We simply have no means of knowing how things have come to this pass in the Selicke household. It is true that Frau Selicke and her husband both try to account for the misery which has overtaken them and from what they say we can infer certain definite facts. But each is so filled with resentment against the other and so intent on absolving himself from all responsibility for the family's predicament, that it is impossible to gain any clear idea of how things have actually developed. Frau Selicke is convinced that it is her husband's weakness as a man which is the source of all their miseries. His selfishness and irresponsibility and now his increasing addiction to drink have, as she sees it, undermined the stability of their life together and deprived them of the security and comfort which other families like themselves have come to enjoy.[23] He, for his part, is equally convinced that it is his wife who is to blame for his apparent failures as a husband and father (pp.64f.). She through her insensitivity and ill-will has made life unbearable for him and forced him to seek escape in an existence of his own outside the home. In her narrow, self-centred

concern for money and reputation she has mismanaged her home, spoilt her children and destroyed all hope of a happy family life (pp.66f.).

It would at least seem fairly clear from the attitudes of Frau Selicke and her husband that it is some basic emotional incompatibility which has come more and more to poison their life together. But even if this is the case, it does not preclude the possibility that the situation has been exacerbated by other, external, factors which they, in the intensity of their resentment against each other, are unable or unwilling to see. At times it seems evident, for instance, that the sheer grinding struggle to make ends meet has put their life together under immense strain. But it is impossible to say just how far this has really been a determining factor. It is quite possible that their poverty is not so much a cause as a symptom of the deterioration of their life together. For although the Selickes are obviously poor, we do not know just how poor they are or what the source of their poverty really is. Here again we are faced by a number of different indications which are in conflict with one another. At the beginning of the play Frau Selicke insists that they are unable to afford something as basic as proper medical treatment for Linchen, their sick child (pp.8 and 14). Later on, however, it transpires that Selicke has a fairly secure position as a clerk and can afford money not only for alcohol but also for small luxuries which seem by no means indispensable (pp.60f.). Similarly the fact that Toni must bring home extra ill-paid work to do over the Christmas holiday, suggests a degree of hardship which seems inconsistent with the sophisticated dress and pretensions of Albrecht her eighteen year-old brother who

has not yet finished his apprenticeship (pp.7f.).

As far as I can see there is no way we can form any final judgment about the situation. We are given such a close-up view of so many single circumstances, yet we can gain no clear understanding of how things have really developed in the Selicke household. We have no means of getting beyond the competing claims of different self-enclosed individuals or of bringing into harmony our own conflicting impressions of what we see and of what we are told.

If in these first two acts our understanding of the dramatic situation is as limited and perplexed as I have claimed, then we have to modify the widely accepted view that the play is fundamentally sentimental in its conception.[24] Certainly there are times, notably in the presentation of the delirious child in the second act, when the dramatists seem bent on involving the spectator directly in the predicament of the characters. But on the whole I think that it is true to say that the situation by which we are confronted is too ambiguous, too demanding, to permit that easy suspension of critical feeling which is the hallmark of the sentimental. Indeed considering how much the spectacle of helpless, bewildered suffering must in itself tend to undermine imaginative detachment, it is remarkable how profoundly our responses are held in check by this pervading intellectual uncertainty - an uncertainty which entails a constant desire to know more and thus a fair degree of openmindedness. Take, for instance, those recurrent allusions to Christmas festivities outside the Selicke household which critics have generally rejected as obtrusively sentimental. Now it seems to me that our awareness of this privation, like our awareness of the family's poverty, is prevented from falling into easy sympathy, by

the fact that the characters themselves do not react to this essentially shared experience in the same way. Although the sound of bells and carols does evoke a happiness from which the family as a whole is cut off, the Selickes are unable to experience this sense of loss together. Each remains (with the striking exception of Toni) locked in his own private embitterment and unable to see beyond his own engrossing suffering. When Frau Selicke, for example, compares herself with the carefree people outside, this does not just have the effect of stressing her own (quite genuine) deprivation; it also, although less obviously, serves to show her inability to feel her family's distress as anything but a terrible affront to herself (p.27). Thus, these allusions which can be seen from one point of view as an overt appeal for sympathy, appear from another as an exposure of the failure of these isolated individuals to transcend their insulating and destructive self-pity.

It is important to stress that this fundamental limitation in our understanding of the dramatic situation in these first two acts of 'Die Familie Selicke' affects our awareness of all the characters. Even Toni who seems separated from the other figures by her simplicity, candour and generosity remains a profoundly enigmatic character. Our knowledge of her is also finally dependent upon the impression she makes upon us as she attempts to come to terms with the different relationships which confront her. Although she seems so clearly distinguished from all the other figures in the play by her energy of will and her unflagging ability to hope, we must concede in the end that we have no real insight into the motives which govern her day-to-day existence. Although, in other

words, the character may strike us as unique, it is presented in the same perspective as the other figures. This seems to me indeed to be one of the main artistic achievements of the play. The dramatists have succeeded remarkably in my view in realising a figure who is fully consistent and predictable, yet about whose innermost experience we know very little. In her tireless attempts to preserve the unity of the family, to face the frustrations which constantly overtake her efforts and to deal fairly with the different individuals who make their conflicting demands upon her - in all of these aspects of her behaviour she appears as a being who is convincingly spontaneous and at the same time completely self-consistent. In spite of this, however, we still have to confess that we know little of the deep-seated aspirations and fears which finally control her experience. We do not know what drives her to identify herself so completely with her family and to set the good of her parents, brothers and sister above her own longings for love and motherhood. Although her openness, sincerity and sheer courage might seem to make it unlikely, we cannot be certain that this defence of her home is not primarily a kind of self-defence, a clinging to the only emotionally secure existence she knows.[25]

So far I have been speaking specifically of the first two acts of the play. I have considered these separately, because it seems to me that in the final act the whole perspective in which the action is presented suddenly changes. Here it would appear that the nature of the dramatists' concern has developed in such a way that it could no longer be accommodated to the restricting, exploratory method generally employed throughout the first two acts. Here, at the climax of the action, they were impelled not just to represent

the decisive developments which take place, but to evaluate them and in so doing to impose a binding interpretation upon the dramatic process as a whole. It is important to see just how this comes about.

In the final act Toni realises that she cannot go through with her decision to marry Wendt. She tries to explain to him that the death of Linchen is a blow from which the family can never recover, since it was really only the love of both father and mother for the child which bound them together and formed a basis for their day-to-day life with one another (pp.82f.). Now that Linchen is dead she cannot leave them to destroy one another and ruin the life of her two younger brothers. In refusing to marry Wendt Toni consciously renounces her natural longing for a life free from strife and anxiety and dedicates herself finally to alleviating a situation which she knows can never really improve (pp.83ff.).

This decision of Toni's is clearly of enormous dramatic significance. In a real sense it brings to an end the upheaval in the life of the Selickes brought about by Linchen's death and guarantees the further existence of the family unit for the foreseeable future. It is noticeable, however, that in representing this decision the dramatists have completely abandoned the sceptical detachment controlling the portrayal of other events in the life of the family. They are concerned not merely to present it as a dramatic event, but also to openly declare its significance.[26] To achieve this the figure of Wendt is, as it were, suddenly deprived of his established rôle and given a new commission. He is made the proponent of a view which has no relation at all to the attitudes which have been seen to determine his behaviour in the earlier parts

of the play. Confronted by this revelation of self-sacrificial goodness he declares himself to be totally transformed. He is no longer the weak, selfish man who had used every available means to tear Toni away from her family and make her his own, but has become instead a man completely possessed by the moral beauty of her act (pp.87ff.). This view of Wendt's regeneration, however, does not seem to be controlled by any preoccupation with the psychology of the character but by the dramatists' need to change its function: to elevate it from a specific limited participant in the dramatic action to a choric voice capable of propounding insights which transcend the relative experience of one particular character. It is noticeable that as Wendt develops morally, he seems more and more to outgrow his own individual modes of feeling and speaking. In the end he becomes indeed the vehicle of a depersonalised rhetoric which is clearly aimed not at any of the dramatic characters but directly at the audience. Over and over again he invokes the renewing power of this self-sacrificial act:

> "Du bist gross und mutig und stark, und ich so klein,
> so feig und - so selbstsüchtig!" (p.87).

And again:

> "Ich habe Dich doch gefunden und Du - Du machst
> mich jetzt zu einem anderen Menschen." (p.89).

This act is finally hailed in fact as a revelation of the character of life itself:

> "Das Leben ist ernst!...Aber jetzt seh' ich, es ist
> doch schön!...Weil solche Menschen wie Du möglich
> sind!" (p.89).

Here we can see the real and to my mind irreparable weakness of 'Die Familie Selicke'. It does not arise out of the adoption of a very confining 'realistic' point of view nor from the inability of

the dramatists to work effectively within this restricted frame. Nor is this weakness implicit in the character of their preoccupation with impotent, embittered suffering, demanding as this preoccupation undoubtedly is. It stems rather from a crucial failure on the part of the dramatists to sustain throughout the action the standpoint and method they have initially adopted: to pursue consistently their investigation of the experience of isolated, helpless individuals held together by imprisoning forces which they cannot begin to understand. After the death of Linchen they are no longer really concerned to elucidate the heightening pressures of the family predicament; they are now intent rather upon invoking a mode of action which transcends this predicament and therefore relativises its significance. It seems to me, however, that this marked shift of interest has no real root in the impetus of their initial preoccupation. It is as if the dramatists were suddenly gripped by a desire to gloss a situation which has been effectively established as ambiguous. They seem all of a sudden anxious to reassure the spectator, to assuage his doubts about the real motives underlying the heroine's decisive act of renunciation. But precisely because they have been so successful in establishing the sheer ambiguity of this situation, this attempt to clarify it in the final act appears as the intrusion of an intelligence from outside the dramatic world itself. It appears as an attempt to reduce the harsh, challenging actuality of the dramatic spectacle, to simplify it in such a way as to make it responsive to the moral aspirations of the audience. And here we can indeed in my view speak of sentimentalisation. The experience of the spectator is being arbitrarily manipulated, forced into a prescribed, and indeed highly conventional frame. He is being

given a binding interpretation of Toni's behaviour and of her relationships with her family, which not only weakens what he has actually experienced but which also seriously distorts it.

IV

Hauptmann's 'Die Weber' (1892) was by far the most controversial play of the Naturalist movement in Germany. It was a work which both in its form and in its message seemed to defy all accepted models and procedures, and seemed indeed bent upon provoking unresolved argument. The statements of contemporary critics show just how widely and irreconcilably their interpretations of the play differed and how hard they found it to define acceptable critical starting-points and methods.[27] It was this disquietening ambiguity which Fontane singled out as the really distinctive feature of 'Die Weber'. Here was a play, he declared, which celebrated revolutionary passion while at the same time showing the futility of revolt.[28] This terse comment by the elderly novelist points to what seems to me to be the quite unusual and enduring power of this work to evoke conflicting and often elusive feelings and to engage us simultaneously at different levels of awareness. This is indeed, to use Fontane's phrase, a two-faced play. The dramatist is concerned to trace the working of social-economic processes which extend far beyond the lives of the dramatic figures and shape their destinies, while at the same time presenting them as the agents of morally significant experience. He is attempting, that is, both to elucidate these forces which determine the reactions of his characters and to portray their experience as significant in ways which cannot be measured in deterministic terms. If we can

understand just what this paradoxical undertaking involves, then we can, I believe, come close to understanding something of the strange, disturbing power of this most demanding play.

In the opening act it becomes clear that the weaver communities have been overtaken by a poverty which is so severe that they are threatened by extinction. They are already in the grip of a real famine.[29] We soon learn that this desperate situation has been brought about by an increasingly drastic lowering of wages and that this in turn has been brought about by a catastrophic recession in the market (pp.345ff.). The full extent of the weavers' impoverishment has only now become apparent, because serious flooding has destroyed their attempts to grow their own food and has also presumably raised the price of the food they are now increasingly forced to buy (p.357). But although this recession is obviously extremely severe, there is no clear indication of what its causes are. There is no reason to doubt the claim of Dreissiger, the weavers' employer, that he finds it all but impossible to sell the cloth they bring him (p.347). At the same time, however, it is noticeable that he does not refuse to accept it and therefore is presumably still hoping that the market will pick up again in the foreseeable future.

Throughout the next two acts we still learn nothing more about the nature of this economic crisis. Certainly, the fact that the weavers' plight has been widely reported in the newspapers and that charitable organisations have been set up to help them, suggests that the deteriorisation of their position has not been sudden and that it has attracted notice far beyond this particular district of Silesia.[30] None the less there is no indication of the real causes

of the weavers' predicament. It is only in the fourth act that it becomes clear that it is not simply the result of local conditions but has its roots in the changing economic situation of Europe as a whole. Their difficulties have arisen, Dreissiger explains, because foreign governments now deny them access to the markets which they have traditionally enjoyed, and that as a result competition on the home market has become lethal (p.431). This statement of Dreissiger's is of considerable importance. It forces us to see the Silesian weavers (like other similarly placed groups) as the casualties of a great shift in the balance of international trade, which itself, we must assume, has been brought about by other deeper-lying socio-economic developments. What these developments actually are and what they signify, none of the dramatic characters seem to know. Neither the weavers themselves nor those in apparent control of their lives have any clear conception of this great historical crisis in which they are all alike caught up.

The nature of this crisis, however, is revealed indirectly and rather casually late in the fourth and then in the fifth acts. Only now is it made clear that mechanical looms are gradually being introduced into the Silesian villages (pp.443; 465). Although some of the weavers regard these with detestation as the symbols of their employers' power, none of them seems to have any notion of their real significance. To the spectator, however, this is a momentous disclosure - a disclosure which modifies his whole understanding of the weavers' position. These looms are for him the portent of an immense change which in the 1840's is gradually overtaking the whole European continent. The existence of these looms in these remote Silesian villages shows the beginnings, even here, of a completely new organisation of industry which must in

time completely destroy the ways in which the weavers have traditionally lived and worked and which must also eventually alter their position in society as a whole.

But this is not all. The existence of these few isolated looms shows not only that a great process of change has begun, but also that it has begun in the most hesitant and haphazard way. It suggests not just that the Silesian weaving industry has fallen far behind developments in the more centralised and highly industrialised countries in Europe, but that it must continue increasingly to do so. Its failure in the international market has not, we must assume, been brought about solely by the decisions of foreign governments, but by its own inability to compete with the price of cloth which is now being mass-produced in other countries.[31]

The existence of these mechanical looms serves therefore to reveal a communal dilemma which is so vast and so serious that it cannot be solved by piece-meal initiatives at a local level. In the light of this revelation it is doubtful if anything the weavers themselves or even their employers attempt to do on their own, can really affect the situation in the long term. The effective re-organisation of this cottage industry, it would seem, is not something which can be brought about by the unco-ordinated actions of single individuals or groups, however good their intentions. This is something which requires concerted forethought, planning and investment on a scale which seems far beyond the reach of these provincial communities themselves. It would seem, in other words, to demand the committed involvement of the government in Berlin. This is a point of great importance and one to which we will have to return.

This gradual elucidation of the economic processes determining the situation of the weavers goes hand in hand with a progressive analysis of their position in society as a whole. These two aspects of the exposition are intimately related and in their implications clearly complementary to one another. Here again it is worth noting that the dramatist is concerned to reveal a situation which is beyond the understanding of any of the dramatic figures. While the spectator is made to see more and more clearly that the weavers as a group are completely isolated and without support, they themselves, whatever they may feel, seem strangely unable to grasp this fact or see just what it entails.

Right at the beginning of the play it is made clear that the employers, if Dreissiger is at all representative, have made no concessions to the weavers in their plight. Their sole concern is to protect themselves from the effects of the recession and they are prepared, if necessary, to lower still further the wages they pay their workers (p.347). What is most noticeable is that Dreissiger never acknowledges any responsibility towards those who work for him. Whether he claims, as he sometimes does, that their hardship is the result of their own laziness and irresponsibility, or whether he sees it as caused by the failure of the government to give them adequate support, he does not regard himself as an employer as under any obligation to them.[32] Even though in part of himself he recoils from the thought that they are faced by starvation, he is still driven to further reduce his payment to them so that he can take on extra workers at no increased cost to himself.[33]

The attitude of Dreissiger is observed in some detail and is of considerable dramatic importance. But although his relationship with the weavers is peculiarly close and of such obvious

significance, it is shown to be in no way dissimilar to that of other individuals from widely differing social groups. His unrelenting concern to safeguard his own financial interests and consequent refusal to acknowledge their real condition appear indeed as symptomatic of the attitudes of all of those who are involved with the weavers. It is made clear in the third act, for instance, that their increasing hardship has in no way placated the hostility which the peasant farmers have always felt towards them (pp.369; 395ff.). It also becomes obvious here that the aristocratic landowners are still intent on protecting the rights which they have traditionally held over the weavers, who are their tenants. Not only have they refused to reduce the high rents they are accustomed to demand, but they still require that the weavers work for them on appointed days without payment as in more prosperous times (pp.369; 395; cf. also p.393).

Even the Church, it also transpires, is involved in this general process of exploitation. The local pastors, far from becoming the spokesmen for the stricken communities, have been concerned rather (as the traveller discovers) to safeguard their own comfortable standard of living (pp.383ff.). Even in cases where deliberate exploitation is absent, it is clear that clerics like Kittelhaus disclaim all interest in the weavers' poverty which they see as having no necessary bearing on their spiritual needs (p.417).

The really decisive revelation, however, comes in the third and fourth acts. Here it becomes clear that the Prussian government has officially investigated the weavers' conditions, but has refused to take any action. Hornig, the pedlar, reports that a government

inspector has indeed been in the district but that he did not go far enough from his coach to really see how the weavers are living (pp.397ff.). Even if he is exaggerating, it is quite plain that no adequate enquiry has taken place. As far as we can judge, many of the weavers themselves do not seem to know that there has been any enquiry at all (p.369). It would seem in fact that although controversy in the press has forced the government to undertake a token investigation, they had already decided, both for ideological and practical reasons, to let events take their course.[34]

This disclosure is of crucial importance; it decisively modifies our whole understanding of the weavers' position. On the one hand, we are being made to see that the upheaval in the life of the weavers has been caused by economic processes which cannot be revoked; on the other, we are being driven to realise that their interests as a group do not coincide with those of any of the more powerful groups by which they are surrounded. The clearer these coinciding insights become, the more obvious it is that it is the attitude of the government in Berlin which will finally decide the fate of the weavers. And this brings us face to face with a recognition of total deadlock. The government, as we have seen, is refusing to intervene. Their attitude, it would appear, could be changed only by some determined political initiative; but it is just such an initiative which the weavers are in no position to take. There is no powerful group willing to take up their case and they themselves have not seen the necessity of making contact with other similarly deprived communities with a view to organising coherent collective action. None of their so-called leaders is

able to see the fatal weakness of their position, to realise the complete futility of any unsupported show of force on their part. There is no one among them who can detach himself from the mounting lust for revenge and realise their complete powerlessness in their present circumstances.

So far for the sake of clarity I have been speaking of this progressive analysis of the weavers' situation as if it were the sole object of dramatic attention. This is, however, very far from the case. This analysis, as I have stressed, is gradual and continuous. Its implications are increasingly borne in upon us at the same time as we witness a drastic change in the outlook and behaviour of the weaver communities. Our awareness of this quickening movement in the dramatic present is indeed in continuous tension with our growing acknowledgement of the implications of the exposition. As our understanding of the weavers' entrapment becomes clearer, so we witness their deepening determination to take the law into their own hands. These two kinds of recognition develop simultaneously and collide more and more sharply with one another. By the time the mass fury of the weavers approaches its peak towards the end of the fourth act, it has already become clear that it cannot improve their situation and can only result in even more repressive measures being taken against them.

And yet to put it like this, is to give no account of the way in which we actually experience the weavers' revolt. It ignores something, and something essential. Certainly, our understanding of the social-economic situation does force us to see their uprising as futile and thus to detach ourselves from all the hopes and

desires which it serves to release in those who take part. Yet it seems to me that this detachment is never unchallenged. There is something about the anguish of the weavers which compels our involvement, which draws us to enter into it as something significant and humanly valid in itself. It is worth trying to find out why this is so.

The crisis which overcomes the weavers takes them completely by surprise and leaves them totally helpless. For generations the whole character of their existence has been determined by a dependence upon their employers which is so fundamental and so unquestionable that it has come to pervade their understanding of life. He, they have always assumed, will guarantee the security of their employment and be responsible for their general well-being. This attitude of filial acceptance has obviously been reinforced by a religious teaching which tends to identify social authority with divine ordinance. The implications of this teaching are most clearly seen in the confident belief of Pastor Kittelhaus and his pupil Hilse that the prevailing social order is the framework in which God has called them to fulfil his laws (p.419; pp.459ff.).

The weavers thus do not experience economic disaster as something separate and specific; it overtakes them rather as a cataclysm which shatters all the undoubted certainties on which their lives are founded. When they are faced by poverty and hunger, they are driven to question not only the conditions of their employment but the nature of the world in which they live. In the second act it is already clear that their despairing attempts to retain their faith in the goodwill of their employers and in the order they represent, have already broken down. For the first time they are being forced to

question their position and confront a disabling sense of doubt. It is made clear here that what has really destroyed the simple faith of figures like Baumert, his wife and Ansorge is the fact that they can see no connection between the way they have lived and the catastrophe which now engulfs them (p.379). They are overwhelmed by a sense of the sheer meaninglessness of their suffering.

It is in this experience of disabling bewilderment that they are engulfed by the revelations of the Weberlied. The liberating, directing power of this song stems from the fact that it explains their disorientating experience of suffering in a way they can all understand and proposes a course of action they can pursue together (pp.375ff.; 411). It denounces the employers as the real source of the weavers' afflictions and calls upon them as a group to rise up and destroy their masters' power. In this way it serves to make articulate a largely unfocussed sense of outrage and to release a corporate yearning for revenge which no individual weaver has yet really dared to acknowledge.

It is significant that this summons to revenge is expressed largely in terms of biblical imagery of judgment and retribution. The song's strange ability to subdue doubts and fears derives in no small measure from its power to invoke accepted sanctions and re-direct known aspirations. It would seem that the weavers fall so quickly under its spell because they are not immediately forced to realise that the ethic it proclaims totally contradicts the values by which they have always lived. Indeed in their intoxicating belief that they can destroy the evils which beset them, they appear to believe that they can bring about a new order of things in which these acknowledged values can be more fully embodied (pp.467ff.).

This is a misapprehension, however. Their recourse to

violence involves a final rejection of the social, moral and religious attitudes in which they have been nurtured. In taking the law into their own hands, as Hilse clearly sees, they are not just defying social authority, but cutting themselves off from the whole structure of metaphysical assurances which have sustained their life together (p.463).

It is doubtful if most of the older weavers ever really acknowledge the immensity of the step they have taken. Even at those moments when they seem most fully possessed by the driving will of the mob, some of them seem unable to accept the purposes they have actually embraced. On entering Dreissiger's house one elderly weaver (whom we must assume to be representative of many) is overcome by a deep confused nostalgia for the simplicity of the life he has left behind (p.441). When the revolt is at its height Baumert is similarly gripped by the strange realisation that he never really wanted to become involved in this violence. At the same time it becomes clear that he is far from having abandoned his old belief that God is in control of man's earthly destiny; even as he leaves to re-join the uprising, he asks Hilse to intercede for him (p.475).

The younger weavers, on the other hand, seem to become progressively more able to confront their experience of dislocation. Jäger's anarchic resentment of authority in all its forms, for instance, implies a profound religious scepticism which seems only to become clear to him in the course of the uprising itself. When in Dreissiger's house he comes face to face with Pastor Kittelhaus, who has both christened and confirmed him, he seems startled by the realisation of his complete separation from his childhood faith:

"...Ich gloob an nischt mehr." (p.427).

The growing involvement of Gotthelf and Luise, Hilse's son and daughter-in-law, with the spirit of the revolt illustrates from a different point of view this essentially corporate experience of the younger generation of weavers. The readiness first of the girl, then of her husband to defy the old man's authority and join the uprising is shown to be grounded in the fact that they can no longer share his faith in a providential order which surpasses all human understanding. As the frenzy of revolt sweeps through the weaver communities, they seem to be brought face to face with the realisation that they suffer without meaning in a cruel and impersonal world (pp.459ff.; 463). For them as for the other younger weavers this realisation brings with it a sense not of loss but of intoxicating freedom and power. Faced by the evil of men and the indifference of God, as another young weaver declares in this final act, they now have the clear responsibility to shape things in accordance with their own desires (p.467 ). The banishment from a secure, divinely ordered world which their parents do not dare to acknowledge, is eagerly grasped by many of the younger weavers as a liberation and a new beginning.

This corporate experience of estrangement and confused hope has a great reverberative force which we should on no account underestimate. It is presented, it is true, in terms of the reactions of particular individuals to a specific historically conditioned crisis. None the less it is apprehended, as I see it, with an immediacy so intense that it increasingly undermines intellectual detachment and grips the imagination as a profound human predicament. It is characteristic of this work that even though we are forced to see

this experience in determinist terms and thus in a sense as explicable, we are also made to share in it, to view it through the eyes of the weavers themselves. In this way, it seems to me, we are compelled to feel an unsuspected depth in this experience and sense its closeness to other experiences of break-down which are visited upon human beings in widely varying circumstances. This basic sense of displacement, of the loss of certainties which have seemed beyond all doubt, is, we are made to feel, essentially similar to that which almost every child must undergo in the process of growth, and which every integrated social group, and probably even every culture, must pass through in the course of its development.[35] The anguish of the stricken weavers, as it is realised here, has the power to penetrate areas of feeling and release associations which have no obvious connections with the explicit preoccupations of the dramatist. Indeed our attitude to the dramatic action as a whole, it seems to me, is much more profoundly shaped by this sense of involvement with the suffering weavers than we consciously realise. The extent to which we are drawn into their experience, is most clearly revealed in the fact that we can accept the death of Hilse as a fitting, even inevitable, climax. Seen from the point of view of the historical crisis as a whole, this event clearly has no particular significance; it derives its clinching, epitomising force from the fact that it shows forth, and in a sense consummates, the exposure and bewilderment of the weavers. This is the only development in the play which we cannot understand more fully than they and which we can in no sense foresee. Here we are totally engulfed in their confusion. The fact that Hilse, the one man who is still utterly convinced of the inscrutable

goodness of God and who consequently rejects the revolt as evil, should be accidentally killed, that he should be killed precisely because he goes on working in accordance with what he considers to be God's will - the irony of this is as baffling and disconcerting to us as to those caught up in the revolt. Like them we cannot avoid speculating on the meaning of this strange event, although we know that we can never be sure if we have really understood it. What light does this unexpected development throw on the weavers' revolt or on the activities of those who seek to subdue it? What bearing does it have on the longing of the weavers for a more just and humane order, or on the belief of the civic authorities in the validity of the prevailing economic system? Commentators over the years have not hesitated to impose their own interpretations on this enigmatic event. Some have argued that it shows the inability of the individual to withstand the impetus of the corporate will; others have claimed that it demonstrates the emptiness of Hilse's belief in divine goodness, while others again have seen it as consummating his belief in the necessity of vicarious suffering.[36] It is not possible to disprove any of these proffered interpretations. In the end, however, we have to concede that we do not know how to see this death, because we do not know in what perspective it must be seen. We simply have no means of knowing whether it is, in fact, accessible to human understanding at all. It is so baffling because its sheer randomness seems to challenge the fundamental assumption of the determinist view which seems to control the presentation of the weavers' existence up to this point: that man's life is wholly and demonstrably dependent upon the operation of social-economic forces and that these forces themselves are open to

rational understanding and thus, possibly, to man's direction. But although Hilse's death thus seems to challenge the confidence of the positivistic view, it does not in itself reveal what other laws do govern human existence or what other forces besides the social have to be taken into account. The challenge of this death lies in the fact that it cannot be assimilated to any clear pattern of events; it seems to declare a world which resists man's understanding - a world like that experienced by the weavers themselves in their new and overwhelming uncertainty.

IV

I would now like to try to draw together the different threads of this discussion. Both 'Die Ehre' and 'Vor Sonnenaufgang', I have suggested, are essentially tentative works which both fail in their different ways to integrate a very strong analytical impulse with patterns of plot-development which are conceived in very conventional terms. The novelty of both works lies in their very vivid view of the degradation of characters who are helpless victims of their material circumstances. This view of degradation is not, however, articulated in a coherent dramatic development. It is expressed partly through single illustrative incidents, some of which (like the return home of the drunken Krause or the Heineckes' reception of the conciliatory Mühlingk) are of great dramatic force; and partly through prolonged and essentially static discussion. But it is true to say that in both works the development of the action which increasingly engages our attention, does not reinforce this process of analysis but serves, albeit in different ways, to divert interest from it.

The relations of 'Die Familie Selicke' and 'Die Weber' with traditional dramatic forms, on the other hand, are much more difficult to determine. In their conception both these works correspond closely to the 'experimental' drama envisaged by Zola in which the dramatic development would reflect the progressive interaction of the determining forces at work in the existence of a group of people held together by the fact of their economic dependence.[37] A drama conceived in this way can have no absolute beginning or end; and any climax it has, must necessarily be qualified by the awareness of the unbroken continuity of the impersonal processes determining the lives of the individual figures. The imaginative impact of 'Die Familie Selicke', I have tried to show, is distorted by the failure of the playwrights to accept the implications inherent in their conception of the dramatic situation. Their concern to put forward an explicit interpretation of Toni's decision to stay at home can be seen to stem from a desire to see this as a moral act which transcends the family dilemma. This decision is thus finally presented (like the love between Robert and Lenore) as embodying a sphere of value which is outside the imprisoning situation and is imaginatively and morally more significant than it.

'Die Weber' is the only play of the four in which the dramatist does not seek to reveal an order of significance beyond the determining situation of the characters. There is nothing in the experience of the weavers, or in that of their only consistent critic, Hilse, which unambiguously discloses a dimension of reality beyond the actual, economically determined circumstances by which their day-to-day life is shaped. Hilse's persisting belief in a

providential order, like the awakening scepticism of most of his fellow workers, appears as the response of an individual mind to a world which is dark and savage and defies all man's longings for clear and final understanding. I have suggested that the cathartic force of the 'Die Weber' stems largely from its peculiar power to realise this deepening experience of existential lostness within the confines of a specific, historically conditioned situation. It is this informing sense of the threatening opacity of life, however it is seen, which, it seems to me, finds its climactic symbol in the death of Hilse.

## (3) Elegies of Dispossession: Max Halbe and Naturalist Drama

To survey the development of Naturalist drama is to notice at once just how little interest it took in the problems of industrialisation and the new social relationships which this had brought into being. Such a survey shows in fact that the range of its effective preoccupations was both narrow and unchanging. In most of the plays of Hartleben, Schlaf, Halbe, Hirschfeld, Flaischlen and Sudermann, interest is focussed almost entirely on the sensitive, aspiring individual as he struggles to find himself in a complex changing world. Over and over again the protagonist is presented as a man who is responsive to the values of a new age and who seeks earnestly to commit himself to them, but who nonetheless feels in himself the disabling power of a past which he has rationally rejected. In this central preoccupation, as in many formal and technical respects, these works are overwhelmingly indebted to the influence of Ibsen. This is perhaps most openly revealed in the unquestioning ease with which the Naturalist dramatists took up the key image of the 'ghosts' and placed it at the very heart of their explorations.[1] This is symptomatic. The whole tendency of their concern to trace the ambiguous, shifting tensions which afflict the conditioned mind, to show the subtle interplay of hope and memory, to reveal above all the treacherous diversity of experience - this bears impressive testimony to their profound imaginative involvement with the work of the Norwegian playwright.

But although the immediate preoccupations of the Naturalist dramatists were so strikingly close to those of Ibsen and although their awareness of the drama as an analytical form was largely

inspired by his transforming achievement, it is impossible to see these later plays as a simple continuation of his work. This is not, as far as I can see, simply a question of creative ability. It is not just that these Naturalist dramas for the most part clearly lack that peculiar imaginative force and technical finesse which are characteristic of Ibsen's work at its best. It is rather that the innate structure of their conception is in some way changed; that the fine balance of energies and impulses embodied in the plays of his middle period has been, consciously or unconsciously, disturbed or rejected by the new generation of dramatists. Despite the continuity of their outward concerns, these Naturalist works reveal a bias of insight and feeling which is in some way different.

If we try to define the character and implications of this imaginative shift, we are struck at once by the sense that these later dramas are almost all completely bereft of that urgent social immediacy which is so typical of Ibsen's plays. There is little sign in any of these later works of a concerted attempt to grasp the shaping forces of corporate life or even to reveal the ways in which the individual's experience of public institutionalised existence impinges upon and affects his innermost feelings. It is important to note this clearly. It is not just that no Naturalist play can rival the immense intellectual curiosity and range of 'Ghosts' or match the disciplined social indignation of 'A Doll's House'. What has to be stressed is that there is (to my knowledge) no German play of this time which reveals the driving concern of 'Pillars of Society' and 'An Enemy of the People' to observe the workings of communal existence and scrutinise the behaviour of those who seek to direct them. And, perhaps most significant of all, there is, as far

as I know, no Naturalist drama which attempted to follow the lead of Anzengruber's 'Das vierte Gebot' and explore the complex interactions between personal and group relationships in the context of urban life.[2] There are certainly many plays set in Berlin. These are, however, not generally concerned to trace the operation of the social and economic forces which shape the life of the individual, but are intent rather on exploring the subjective experience of the estranged being in an impersonal world. This seems to me to be characteristic. Although they invoke specific social tensions and present many typical social relationships, most Naturalist plays are largely devoid of interest in the wider social dimensions of experience.[3] If we fail to grasp this, we are in danger of getting things out of perspective. For instance, it is not true to say as some Marxist critics have done that in 'Hanna Jagert' Hartleben was allowing himself to ridicule woman's struggle for independence;[4] it is just that he has next to no interest in the social implications of his subject. Although at first he seems all set to investigate the position of the gifted woman in modern society, he becomes more and more preoccupied with the subjective dilemma of one woman who struggles to achieve inner unity. And this is by no means an isolated case. The same could be said with only minor qualifications about plays like Halbe's 'Die Heimatlosen', Dreyer's 'Drei' or Sudermann's 'Heimat' which also seem at first sight to deal with the problems of female emancipation. In all of them an apparent concern to delineate a social dilemma merely obscures a controlling preoccupation with the emotional conflicts of a single withdrawn individual. This restriction of interest is also apparent in plays purporting to represent other areas of social experience. The

Naturalists, as Osborne has pointed out, had a marked predilection for the Künstlerdrama;[5] but in none of these plays to my knowledge was there a serious attempt to relate the crisis in the experience of the artist with the wider dislocations in the consciousness of society as a whole or even to question seriously the function of the artist in the modern world. There are also many Naturalist dramas like Hartleben's 'Rosenmontag' and 'Abschied vom Regiment' or Schnitzler's 'Freiwild' in which the figure of the army officer is at the centre of interest; but here again one can see little real concern to explore the social aspects of a personal dilemma and place the ethos of the military life in the context of the evolving outlook of contemporary society as a whole.[6]

This seems to me to be characteristic of Naturalist drama. Although this generation of writers was outwardly concerned to localise the dramatic action and define in detail the situation and life-history of the individual figures, their real attention was directed almost completely towards the subjective consciousness in a way which is quite uncharacteristic of Ibsen's social dramas. In this respect at least the directing preoccupations of many Naturalist works seem closer to the restricted concerns of Young German drama than to those of the Norwegian's social plays. Here, as in these earlier works, there is a decisive tendency to reduce the scope of imaginative interest to the terms of a specific moral dilemma and to see the social only in the perspective of a purely personal concern.[7]

This is closely related to another factor which is of still more basic importance for an understanding of Naturalist drama. Almost all the dramatists connected with the new movement attempted

to exploit and in some ways extend the analytical methods which Ibsen had developed with a rigorous intellectual precision and (just as important) fine artistic tact. One of their aims often seems to have been to outdo Ibsen in the minute delineation of the pressures, inner and outer, which control the life of the individual. They appear, in other words, to have been intent on creating a more fully diagnostic form, a form, that is, generally in closer and more obvious accordance with positivistic categories of thought. At the same time, however, most of the Naturalist dramatists clearly did not see themselves as necessarily committed to a narrowly determinist view of dramatic action. They seem rather to have been impelled by a desire to develop the expository tendencies of the drama without abandoning those expressive possibilities traditionally seen as available to the dramatic form. Although they saw the drama as capable of procedures of analysis more rigorous and extensive than any yet realised, they did not for the most part see this as excluding action in the conventional sense; although they sought to make it a severely discursive mode, they were still concerned to exploit its powers of poetic suggestion and intensification. Many of the confusions which we generally consider typical of Naturalist drama stem in the last resort from this attempt to integrate two different kinds of inspiration, two different kinds of method and purpose. This characteristic synthesising impulse is evident in many Naturalist comedies and other works which set out to enact a process of healing. In plays like Hartleben's 'Hanna Jagert', Hirschfeld's 'Die Mütter', Flaischlen's 'Martin Lehnhardt' or Sudermann's 'Das Glück im Winkel' the protagonist is seen as growing out of a state of crippling inner division into an

experience of vital harmony. There is in all these works an analysis of psychic disorder which is both rigorous and far-reaching; the aim of the dramatist, however, is not to show the spiritual frailty of the individual but to reveal his powers of growth and regeneration. In some cases this development is disclosed in the rejection of false aspirations. In 'Hanne Jagert' and 'Das Glück im Winkel' the heroine's final acceptance of her role as wife and mother reveals the attainment of a new understanding of herself and of her situation. In 'Die Mütter' it is likewise the hero's rejection of a destructive vision of independence which marks the birth of a new quality of self-awareness.[8] In other cases it is precisely the refusal to abandon a cherished ambition which reveals a new unity and singleness of purpose. In Schlaf's 'Gertrud', for instance, it is the heroine's unyielding devotion to her search for passion which carries her beyond the threat of despair. The protagonist's renewed commitment to his vocation in 'Martin Lehnhardt' is likewise portrayed as a decisive overcoming of his spiritual confusion.[9] But whatever the particular character of this development, it is represented as a harmonious integration of the psychic life of the individual, as the recovery of a lost singleness of will and aspiration. It is noticeable, however, that in all these plays this assertion of inner growth remains a matter of direct and essentially rhetorical statement; it is nowhere fully enacted. In each case it involves, in fact, a noticeable shift of perspective and tone which in some cases undermines the fundamental unity of the dramatic conception. The attempt to combine a systematic use of analytical methods with a moral concern to suggest the ultimate freedom of the individual

seems to involve the dramatist in an uncertainty which he has not been able to resolve imaginatively. It is worth looking at this more closely.

The nature of the problem can be clearly seen in 'Die Mütter'. In this play the hopeful ending is seen as brought about by a decisive change of attitude on the part of Marie, Robert's fiancée. She, having come to understand the real gravity of the emotional crisis in which he is caught up, renounces her claim upon his love and urges him to be reconciled with his family (pp.138ff.). In so doing she makes it possible for him to restore the relationships upon which (as she now knows) his emotional life really depends. At the same time she is fully aware that in effecting this reconciliation she is necessarily cutting herself off from the man she loves. This crucial decision is presented as a conscious act of self-abnegation. By refusing to tell him that she is expecting his child she knowingly relinquishes her last hold upon his affections (pp.136f.).

This view of a decisive inner development on the part of Marie lacks all real dramatic authority. It has no real basis in the controlling apprehension of the character. It seems, in fact, directly to contradict the conception of the figure as the object of environmental forces which has been consistently articulated in the earlier parts of the play, and thus to repudiate the norms of psychological necessity in terms of which an awareness of the character has been established. For Marie's aggressively possessive feelings towards Robert have been shown to be conditioned by desires and fears which stem from a life-time awareness of brutalising hardship. Her fierce resentment of his attachments to

his family has been portrayed throughout as symptomatic of a mind still governed by the coercive force of childhood and adolescent experience - experience which she herself is unable to evaluate much less control. Even in her final encounter with Robert's sister, Hedwig, this resentment is still very evident:

> "Von einer Versöhnung kann bei mir keine Rede sein. ... Wenn Se mein Leben hinter sich hätten, dächten Se auch nich anders." (p.135)

Yet her decision to renounce her claim on Robert implies nothing less than an overcoming of those compulsions which have determined her whole psychic development; it reveals a willingness to accept as an unmarried mother a degree of poverty and humiliation greater than any she has yet known. Having presented the character in such a way as to suggest that its every impulse and reaction can be understood and predicted, the dramatist now, without warning, attempts to present it as a centre of mysterious, independent life, which we can admire but not fully understand.

In 'Hanna Jagert' the same confusion is apparent. Here the analysis of the pressures which isolate the heroine first from her conventional home background and then from the impersonal, male-dominated world of business, is conducted with a clarity and confidence which seem to suggest the absolute authority of the determinist view of the character. Throughout the different stages of her life the persisting confusion of her emotional responses is closely and sceptically diagnosed. She is portrayed as an individual who is forced by the vitality of her alert, creative mind to reject the subservience of her allotted social position, yet who is unable to find fulfilment in the harsh competitive world into which her search for fulfilment inevitably

leads her. She is shown - or so it would appear - as a being who in this social situation must always be divided against herself (pp.97ff.).

In the last act of the play, however, the dramatist seeks to propose a final resolution of this inner conflict. Her readiness to marry Bernhard is presented as the proof of the fact that she has at last come to terms with her own self. In her life with him in upper-class society she will at last, the dramatist would have us believe, reconcile her need for independence of thought and action with her largely repressed yearning for profound emotional attachments (pp.114f.). It is noticeable, however, that this assertion of a serious development on the part of the heroine is not borne out by any concrete sign of change in her immediate responses. She does not appear in any way revitalised by this anticipation of a new life or by the fuller understanding of her own complex nature which she is supposed to have achieved. She seems, in fact, signally unexpectant, even resigned.

This impression is fatal to the dramatist's aims. Despite all his protestations to the contrary her readiness to marry Bernhard impresses itself upon us not as an achievement but as a surrender. It seems to denote the collapse of her long fight against conformity and compromise. Hanna herself openly admits that her desire for marriage has been influenced by the fact that she bears Bernhard's child (pp.115). The strangely casual, non-committal way in which this confession is made, is no doubt meant to be taken as a sign of her undeviating sophistication. But within the context of her general apathy it would seem rather to confirm the view that her readiness to marry is more deeply bound by purely practical and

conventional considerations than she herself is prepared to admit - those very considerations which till now she has not allowed to govern her life. Seen in the perspective of her whole lonely, anguished life this decision appears irresistibly as the capitulation of an aging woman before the prospect of an unending isolation. It appears as a compromise and thus in the terms of her rebellion as a failure. Here, as so often in Naturalist works, the dramatist has been unable to move successfully from a seemingly comprehensive process of social analysis to the suggestion of an evolving personal destiny. Here too the concern to evoke a decisive inward development is overridden by the force of a sceptical determinist vision.

This same discrepancy between artistic aim and creative feeling can also be seen in 'Das Glück im Winkel' and 'Martin Lehnhardt'. In both plays the central figure is an individual whose emotional needs are at odds with his conscious understanding of his existence. Although both seem to have committed themselves finally to a new way of life both remain vulnerable to the memory of a past from which they seek to free themselves.[10] At times this sense of inner tension acquires such force that it paralyses the will of the character and exposes him to an awareness of complete powerlessness. However, in both these works, as in those just discussed, the aim of the dramatist is to show the power of the character to overcome this sense of inner disruption. The specific character of this spiritual progression, however, is not made very clear. In both plays attention is deflected at a crucial stage in the action away from the causality of the inner life to changes in the outer situation of the character.

This evasion seems to me to highlight the disabling weakness of both works. The carefully established view of a contradiction which has deep roots in the psychic evolution of the character, is not matched by any corresponding awareness of potentialities of growth which have not yet found realisation. The dilemma of Elisabeth in 'Das Glück im Winkel' is presented in terms which would seem to suggest an irreparable split between her instinctual make-up and her moral awareness. She is portrayed as an individual who by temperament and upbringing is drawn to the arduous moral outlook of the middle-class milieu in which her life must be lived out.[11] At the same time it becomes increasingly clear that her youthful experience of life in the refined, licentious world of upper-class society has made her conscious of a sensuality in herself which finds no place in her moral understanding of her own being and which she has tried to subdue by the choice of a secluded ordered existence (pp.11; 27f.).

The real nature of this inner conflict is finally made clear to her in her crucial re-encounter with von Röcknitz with whom she has had a long and troubled association. This vital, sophisticated figure who openly affirms an ethos of remorseless self-assertion, has for years exerted a hypnotic control over her imagination which she has struggled in vain to reject (pp.54; 79; 89). Now, under the impact of his pressing attentions, she is forced to admit the hidden force of this attraction and with it the deprivation of the life she has made her own. In openly confronting this conflict within herself Elisabeth comes face to face with the reality of her divided self. This knowledge, however, implies the recognition that she can find no lasting fulfilment either in the restricted,

dedicated life she has chosen for herself nor in the freer sophisticated existence which haunts her imagination (pp.124f.). It would seem, in other words, to entail an acceptance of contradiction as the inescapable condition of her life. To this process of recognition, however, the dramatist ascribes a vital, transforming significance. It is seen as enabling her to come to a new understanding of the essentially positive nature of the life she has chosen, and in particular of the great self-effacing generosity of her husband who has made no demands upon her in this time of crisis (pp.124ff.). This new understanding, as it is portrayed here, elicits the possibility of a deeper affirmation, and this, in turn, the possibility of a fuller, freer commitment.

The heroine herself can give no clear account of this crucial experience of renewal; her obvious sincerity is seen as proof enough of its authenticity. But when this experience is set in connection with the prolonged conflict which has dominated her life, its very suddenness is enough to throw it into doubt. When seen in the context of these years of persisting upheaval, this sudden sense of release cannot easily be accepted as a proof of genuine inner change; it imposes itself upon us rather as the expression of a mind in flight from a suffering which it is no longer able consciously to sustain. This impression, it seems to me, is made inevitable by the way in which the character has been presented throughout the play. Her whole development has been displayed in a way which seems calculated to deny her those very resources of spirit which this positive resolution necessarily presuppose. For she is seen above all as imprisoned in her suffering, as unable throughout her youth and early adult life to really

confront or understand it. In consequence, it is hard to see this final experience as anything but a disguised extension of this chronic process of estrangement. In this situation her sense of resolution appears as the symptom of her continuing failure to come to terms with a conflict which now threatens completely to overwhelm her, as the symptom of an involuntary flight from a tension which has become completely unbearable.

In Flaischlen's 'Martin Lehnhardt' a similar kind of conflict is delineated. The protagonist is seen as a man who has revolted against the narrow-minded conservatism of his family which has regarded itself for generations as the champions of the Lutheran Church (pp.7ff.). Both in his academic studies and in the conduct of his private affairs he has struggled to create a way of life in keeping with his own vision of personal freedom and dignity. However, this attempt to liberate himself from the grip of inherited prejudice is seen as having plunged him into great emotional turmoil. Revolt has not, as he had hoped, brought fulfilment but the experience of a deeper and more perplexing disquiet (pp.16ff.; 22ff.). Despite his determined struggle against what he sees as false inhibition, it is clear that he still regards his first timid experiments in student debauchery with revulsion (pp.17ff.). And even the thought of his discrete liaison with his landlady still fills him with a sense of great unease (pp.31f.). Still more puzzling is the fact that although he has experienced the stifling uniformity of rural life at first hand, he still longs for it as a source of sustaining wholesome simplicity (pp.26; 31).

Lehnhardt's whole experience is racked by this awareness of contradiction. His belief in man's power to create his own destiny

without supernatural support is beset by the sense of the intractable confusions of his own existence (pp.62; 73f.). Although he is convinced that moral values are the creation of the human spirit and are a function of man's social development, he is haunted by a dislocating awareness of failure for which he can find no adequate explanation (p.75). This has gained such a hold upon his mind that he can no longer envisage a harmonious state of being in which his will would not be maimed by anxiety and regret. He can see life only as an endless process of disillusion haunted by the sense of "ein endloser moralischer Kater...nicht wegen Gestern, sondern wegen Morgen." (p.25). His dreams of the immeasurable possibilities of man's future is in contrast with his own secret longing for death as the only sure release from suffering (p.96).

But although the hero's experience of dilemma is seen to be very severe, it is not regarded by the dramatist as irredeemable. At the moment when Lehnhardt feels himself completely engulfed by a sense of failure some hidden power in himself is released. The decisive meeting with his uncle Pastor Bilfinger in the third act with its inevitable accusations of betrayal and immorality, seems to set in motion a decisive process of spiritual restoration. It is as if these accusations which are heaped upon him, had the power to release those feelings of self-hatred which already warp his experience and in so doing to lessen their compulsive hold upon him (pp.57ff.). But however it comes about, this bitter confrontation is seen as precipitating a new feeling of self-reliance and confidence. After he has confessed the whole story of his spiritual anguish to Käthe and re-affirmed the values which have

driven him to reject the dogmas of orthodox Christianity, he seems to sense clearly that the experience of dislocation which has threatened to overwhelm him, is itself the necessary counterpart of his great aspiration, a proof of the immensity of the gulf which he seeks to cross (pp.73f.). The most striking sign of his new vitality is the confidence with which he accepts the editorship of a new free-thinking journal (pp.96ff.). Here he finds an outlet in which all his talents will be used in a way directly relevant to the life of society at large.

This conception of climax is clearly determined in large part by propagandist considerations. Its function is to draw the spectator's imagination away from a troubled present towards a happier future when the hero's social influence will be greater and the views he represents will find wide general acceptance. But such speculations cannot long withstand the realisation that the hero's situation at the end of the dramatic action is essentially unchanged. The events which are seen as bringing him to a fuller understanding of his dilemma do not in themselves help to resolve it. Indeed the fact that Lehnhardt is shown to be so susceptible to the interventions of other figures and to changes in his financial circumstances, would seem to point to an underlying weakness in his character which the dramatist is intent upon ignoring. At the end of the play he still appears as a man who must live alone but who is unable to sustain this isolation. He is still very much an exile in this society. His commitment to progressive ideas places him inevitably in a position in which he must face continuous opposition and frequent revilement. In this struggle he cannot draw upon the support of his family or seek respite in the world in which he was

brought up - the only world in which he feels at home (pp.26ff.; 75). Whatever his fortunes in this ceaseless struggle, he remains a volatile, impressionable individual, ill-suited by his temperament and by his emotional needs to endure the immense strains which it entails.

In all of these plays just discussed there is a common concern to define a dilemma which, although serious, is shown in the end to be resolvable. All of them in one way or another make a positive statement about the power of the individual to confront and transcend his dependence on environmental forces. But in none of these works, as I see them, does this affirmative insight gain full, concrete embodiment; it seems in each case to remain untouched by the creative processes of the dramatist's imagination.

It is important to note the exact nature of this recurrent failure. In all these plays the imagination of the playwright is (as I have tried to show) fully responsive only to the pressures of deterministic awareness; it is this alone that really activates and controls his creative insight. These works all offer a sure and relatively sophisticated analysis of the individual life as part of an enveloping process of social causation. And the systematic severity with which these analytical procedures are used, like the unquestioned authority attributed to them throughout the long expository sections of the plays, necessarily shapes our awareness of the world in which the action is set. It forces upon us certain clear and restrictive assumptions and expectations in terms of which we necessarily confront every aspect of the dramatic development. It seems to presuppose a world which is coherent, comprehensible and completely open to empirical investigation. The whole tendency of this awareness is deeply inimical to the final concern of the

dramatist to show the individual life as in some way outside and independent of the social, to reveal it, in other words, as a mysterious centre of creative life which cannot be ultimately evaluated in positivistic terms.[12] This seems to me to be the crucial point. The perspective in which character is portrayed in all these plays, the type of knowledge which is consistently assumed to make it accessible to us, and (not least) the whole atmosphere of strain and fatigue which attends almost all the reactions of the figures themselves - all of this seems calculated to stress the conditioned, determinate nature of their experience.[13] And it is this imaginative presupposition which (as I have tried to show) conditions our final awareness of the destiny of figures like Hanna Jagert, Martin Lehnhardt or Elisabeth Weidemann - however much the dramatist insists upon their powers of growth and self-regeneration.

The discrepancy in the conception of these plays just discussed is also apparent in a somewhat different form in the attempts of some Naturalist dramatists to create a sense of tragic significance. In plays as outwardly different as Hartleben's 'Rosenmontag', Dreyer's 'Winterschlaf', Weigand's 'Florian Geyer' or Sudermann's 'Sodoms Ende' it is possible to see clear signs of an imaginative tension which has not been fully resolved. The protagonist in all these works is portrayed as the victim of a severe inner crisis which has its roots in a fundamental upheaval in the life of society. They are all individuals who, like so many others in Naturalist plays, consciously reject the social-moral assumptions of the world into which they are born, yet who remain bound to it in their deepest feelings. These works are basically analytical in

structure. The events which form their outer action, like the self-enquiries of the characters and their confrontations with one another, are all integrated in such a way as to clarify a central dilemma and to reveal the complex processes through which it has come into being. Yet the final aim of the dramatist in these plays is not simply to diagnose the nature of the individual's subjection to impersonal forces. His concern is rather to show in this experience of social estrangement the hero's growing awareness of an antagonism which transcends his immediate circumstances.[14] The implications of this artistic aim can, I think, be most clearly observed in 'Rosenmontag' and 'Sodoms Ende' and it is worth pausing to consider these two works in some detail.

Willy Janikow, the central figure in 'Sodoms Ende', is seen primarily as a man trapped between two ways of life, two orders of value and unable to commit himself wholeheartedly to either. While he seems irretrievably cut off from the simplicity of his childhood world by the force of his great artistic ambition, he also remains inwardly withdrawn from the debauched, cyncial society in which his life has become deeply enmeshed.[15] This two-fold estrangement (as in so many works of the time) reveals a genuine division of spirit. On the one hand, he is seen as impelled by a sense of the ultimately self-justifying character of aesthetic experience as something beyond the scope of moral judgement. In terms of this belief all experience is valid if it helps to expand his self-awareness and so enhance his creative power (pp.78f.). At the same time, however, it is noticeable that his emotional life is still governed by a longing for the simple pieties and affections which gave order and meaning to his childhood

experience (pp.71ff.; 82ff.). Between these two divergent impulses there can be no final harmony.

Although the dramatist is clearly intent upon revealing the causes of the hero's inner conflict in a specific social-historical situation, he is also at pains to portray his final experience of breakdown as a spiritual catastrophe of potentially timeless significance. As the dramatic action develops, Willy's pursuit of his aesthetic ideal is presented more and more clearly as a Prometheus-like revolt against the innate limits of his own self-hood. His decisive meeting with the degenerate Adah is seen as releasing his half-repressed desire for an experience of absolute self-abandonment in which he would be freed from the trammels of his everyday consciousness (pp.88ff.). It is in this impassioned search for freedom that he pursues his unspoken desire to violate the innocence of Klärchen:

> "Leben, leben, geniessen, Gott sein...ich kann alles - ich darf alles - denn es kleidet mich!" (p.107)

This search for self-transcendence, however, leads to destruction. The realisation that Klärchen has killed herself thrusts him into a despair from which he never recovers. Like Heinrich in Hauptmann's 'Die versunkene Glocke' he is unable to bear the knowledge that his search for renewal has cost another's life, and like him he falls a prey to a disintegrating feeling of remorse (pp.153f.).

The portentous tone informing the final parts of 'Sodoms Ende' is clearly aimed at lessening a sense of the play's specific social context. It is designed to blur our awareness of a man torn between two concrete and essentially relative views of life and to

evoke a recognition of a man at odds with his destiny. Willy is being represented here not primarily as a casualty of social upheaval but as the victim of the nemesis visited on those who transgress the intrinsic limits of their own selfhood. His death is portrayed as the outcome of a consuming longing for a kind of fulfilment which can only destroy him (pp.154f.).

In 'Rosenmontag' there is a similar attempt to elevate the standing of the hero in the course of the dramatic action. In the early stages of the action Hans Rudorff is seen as the victim of socially determined prejudices both in himself and in his associates who try to force him into conformity with accepted standards of discipline. He too is a figure who strives desperately to live on the frontiers of two opposing worlds. His aim is to observe what he considers the essential obligations inherent in his role as an army officer while still maintaining wide freedom of thought and action in his private life.[16] This search for compromise, however, proves in the end to be incompatible with the close-knit, corporate character of military existence. The decisive crisis in his life is brought about by the fact that some of his fellow-officers take it upon themselves to disrupt his relationship with Gertrude, the lower-class girl with whom he is deeply in love (p.215). The impact of this intrigue on the dramatic development does not in itself, as Miss Dosenheimer claims, rob the play of all potentially tragic significance.[17] Although this break with Gertrude does have a disastrous impact on his emotional life, it does not in itself determine the character of his subsequent experience. It has the effect only of forcing Hans to face the fact of his total isolation in the military world and to

make the crucial choice which he has persistently tried to evade. It does not, in other words, rob him of the final responsibility of directing the course of his own life. Once he has seen through this conspiracy he still has (outwardly at least) the chance of restoring his relationship with Gertrude. This becomes unmistakably clear when Harold, his only real friend among his fellow-officers, offers him the money which would enable him to escape to a new life. His reply is unhesitating and unambiguous:

"Ich danke dir Harold, aber...Fahnenflucht...nein." (p.292)

But although Hans acknowledges the absolute character of his oath of allegiance, this does not imply any subordination of his experience of love. To this he attributes a value no less sacred and no less inviolable. He sees himself faced by conflicting claims upon his loyalties which he cannot reconcile. It is only in his voluntary death that he can, as he comes to see it, uphold his honour as an officer and at the same time assert the sanctity of his experience of love. His decision, we must note, is not seen as a sign of surrender but as proof of an unbroken search for fulfilment. This is most clearly revealed in the fact that Gertrude, who intuitively senses his concealed intention, is immediately inspired by this vision of death as a state of ultimate freedom - freedom from the contradictions inherent in all earthly experience. To enter death with him is for her to celebrate an indissoluble union:

"Es wäre nur eine dunkle Pforte...durch die müssten wir hindurch...und dann ewig, ewig vereint...?" (p.290).

The presentation of the catastrophe here, as in 'Sodoms Ende',

is marked by a search for dramatic effects which are incompatible with strictly analytical procedures. In neither case, however, does this aspiration seem to grow inevitably out of the total conception of the work. To put it differently, the significance attributed to the hero's death has no necessary connection with its actual causes. This failure, as I see it, derives once again from a basic inability to establish the protagonist as a centre of real, creative life. Neither Willy nor Hans, as they are actually presented, have the strength of real defiance which is rhetorically ascribed to them; their destinies seem totally and predictably imposed upon them from without. In 'Sodoms Ende' the very emphasis with which the hero's involvement in two conflicting milieux is laid bare, conspires to call in question the freedom of his artistic aspirations. The extent and precision of this analysis has the effect of relativising his inner conflict, of showing its roots in the tensions of his particular social situation. As the dramatic action develops, the dilemma which we are meant to see as inherent in his creative personality appears more and more clearly as a confusion which is fully explicable in deterministic terms.

It is worth looking at this more clearly. The death of the hero in both works is represented as the outcome of a disproportion between creative aspiration and emotional frailty which is inherent in his individuality. To respond adequately to the designs of the dramatist we must be fully convinced of the potentially transforming power of his artistic imagination. But the very character of his dilemma as it is here laid bare, indicates the near impotence of his creative will. The chronic vacillating attraction of Willy

Janikow to the strained conscientiousness of his childhood home, like his distraught longing for the spurious refinement of the bohemian world, betrays above all a lack of that real imaginative vitality which might, if only for a time, release him from the constraints of what is fundamentally a moral conflict. His tendency to tortured self-analysis reveals not the abnormal sensitivity of his creative mind but the bondage of an ordinary man to conventional doubts and anxieties which he affects to despise. It is this which is disclosed in his recurrent yearning for a kind of work which is directly useful to the life of the community (p.38). And it is this which underlies the sense of guilt with which he contemplates his parents' poverty and the sacrifices which they have made so that his ambitions as an artist might be fulfilled. At the moment of breakdown he is, significantly, still largely preoccupied by the thought that he has betrayed his benefactors, that he has misused their trust and their efforts on his behalf (pp.153f.).

In 'Rosenmontag' the final assertion of tragic meaning is just as sharply at odds with the actual processes of the dramatic development. Indeed, as I see it, this invocation of love as a redemptive power is imposed upon a demonstration of its irreparable failure. Despite the dramatist's attempt to surround the lovers' deaths with an aura of mystical suggestion, it is clear that their love is thwarted not in the last resort by external circumstances but by inhibitions in themselves. Their desire to celebrate their love in death, whatever they tell themselves, stems from a lack of real will to live it here and now. And this is crucial. For this failure of will (and nerve) is surely proof that

love lacks that galvanising, re-creative force which the lovers expressly attribute to it. Their belief in its ultimate power co-exists strangely with their acceptance of its necessary subordination to attitudes and values which they claim to reject. Although Hans sees that the military ethos contradicts his own deepest impulses and although he despises those who are its characteristic proponents, he nonetheless accords it an undoubted priority over his love - a priority which Gertrude also unquestioningly accepts. So great is the authority of this outlook over his imagination that even this death, which he sees as the proof of his ultimate freedom, is instinctively planned and carried out in full accordance with the standards of priority accepted by his fellow-officers. No, in this context it is impossible to see the lovers' desire for death as anything but an unacknowledged acceptance of defeat. It shows a dependence on socially determined attitudes which is so profound and compelling that it precludes the very possibility of real self-understanding and thus of love itself as they understand it. Both 'Sodoms Ende' and 'Rosenmontag' represent a clear, although necessarily tentative, search for a new kind of synthesis. The aim of the dramatist in both cases is to fuse a full analysis of a socially determined crisis with a delineation of a spiritual conflict which is of potentially universal significance. In neither work, however, are these two planes of apprehension brought into real organic interaction; in neither case does the suggestion of a higher order of conflict seem to have any real basis in the rigorous definition of a specific social dilemma. It might be thought that this failure can be attributed simply to technical inadequacies on the part of the two

dramatists. Certainly we should not underestimate the extent of the difficulties they faced. The concern to particularise the dramatic world more fully than had ever been attempted before, to reveal it as a close-knit, limited sphere directly continuous with the actual social world, and, above all, to show its seemingly total openness to empirical investigation - all of this tends to impose severe restraints upon our imagination and to make it unresponsive to evocative statements of any kind. Clearly, only the most delicate and assured of methods would have been adequate to this ambitious undertaking. But although the technical problems involved in their undertaking were clearly considerable, this is not in my view the real source of the failure in these two plays. The formal incoherence here, as in the comic works earlier discussed, would seem to reveal a split in the creative aspiration of the dramatists themselves - a tension between their conscious aims and the tendencies of their creative imagination which they have signally failed to confront. For although both Sudermann and Hartleben have attempted in very similar ways to revive traditional modes of tragic feeling, they have not been able to relate this creatively to the determinist vision of life which actually controls their imaginative awareness. Here one can see an explicit moral concern to invoke an order of significance beyond the social which has not really been assimilated by the creative imagination. It is this discrepancy which underlies (I believe) that hesitancy and confusion characteristic of so many Naturalist plays. The attempt to use positivistic methods of analysis rigorously and systematically co-exists uneasily with a general refusal to accept the implications of a consistently positivist outlook. The vague, hopeful search for a new synthesis which is the mark of most plays in the 1890's leads

over and over again to palpable inconsistencies of tone and feeling and often to a complete breakdown of formal unity.

I have been so concerned to stress the incoherence in the conception of these Naturalist plays not just because it helps to define the historical character of the Naturalist drama as a whole but also because it provides a context in which to see the work of Halbe. Once we have noted the recurrent tensions in these lesser plays, we will be in a better position to see the underlying connections between Halbe's work and the general tendencies of Naturalist drama, on the one hand, and to appreciate the distinctive imaginative character of his type of play, on the other.[18] In his work we can see that crisis of artistic sensibility, that same tension of insights and methods which is apparent in the plays just discussed. Here, however, that tension (as I see it) has been intuitively acknowledged and assimilated in most cases to a total imaginative statement. It is here (in his best plays at least) fully embodied, made the basis of a distinctive form of drama which is both close to conventionally Naturalist modes and at the same time palpably removed from them.

In Halbe's plays, as in those just discussed, the hero's experience of conflict is closely bound up with his awareness of social change. The dramatist's main concern is here too with figures who are driven to reject an inherited way of life only to find that they are still helplessly bound to it by deep, hidden desires over which they have no control. These are individuals who, in Degenhardt's words in 'Die Heimatlosen', have outgrown the world into which they were born but have been unable to find a home in

the new world which seemed to beckon them.[19] The self-awareness of all these figures is shaped by a crucial adolescent experience of estrangement within the family. Whether, like Hugo Tetzlaff in 'Eisgang' or Karl-Egon in 'Haus Rosenhagen', they attempt to reconcile their fulfilment of an inherited social role with their sense of a valid social ideal, or whether like Ernst Winter in 'Freie Liebe' or Lotte Burwig in 'Die Heimatlosen' or Paul Warkentin in 'Mutter Erde', they reject this role in the search for a completely new way of life, they are all aware that they are responding to the values of a new age which have as yet not found general acceptance.[20] In their various aims they all assert the right to shape their own lives according to their own inner imperatives - a right which, as they are well aware, was not claimed in the same way by their fathers.

But despite this enthusiastic commitment to a free, personal vision of life none of these figures is able to achieve the fulfilment for which he strives. And this failure - again as in most dramas of the time - is set in close connection with the actual social experience of the protagonist. Hugo, Paul, Lotte, Karl-Egon and even Winter are overcome by a characteristic experience of futility which is in part at least clearly determined by the pressures of their specific social situation. In 'Die Heimatlosen' and 'Mutter Erde' the defeat of the central figure seems to stem directly from his failure to adjust to the harsh anonymity of city life. Both Paul and Lotte reject the security of inherited relationships in a close-knit provincial community for the freedom of Berlin in which they can live unimpeded by restrictive conventions. In both cases, however, this break with the

sustaining certainties of childhood has effects upon them which they are obviously at a loss to understand. In an unconscious search for a new emotional stability they both fall under the sway of a strong assertive personality who comes more and more to dominate their lives.[21] This process of subjection is shown in both works to have wide social implications. Lotte's relationship with Döhring and Paul's with Hella are portrayed as revealing modes of human contact which are characteristic of the depersonalised life of the modern city. Hella, who ruthlessly seeks to subject her married life to her ideal of free, intellectual womanhood and Döhring, who seeks sexual relationships as a means of simple sensual gratification, are presented as figures who exemplify the increasing disconnection of individuals in modern urban society. The driving egotism of these individuals is also variously reflected in the behaviour of minor characters who serve expressly to reveal the alienating pressures of city life.[22]

In 'Eisgang' and 'Haus Rosenhagen', as also in 'Jugend' and 'Freie Liebe', the specific dilemma of the protagonist is also shown to be directly related to a general crisis in the life of society as a whole. The attempts of Hugo in 'Eisgang' to introduce a more just and humane way of running his estate is thwarted by difficulties without and tensions in himself which can be seen to arise directly out of his particular social situation. On a purely practical level his hopes of a fundamental re-organisation are gravely endangered by the government's plans to re-channel the course of the river. This must lead, as he recognises, to a great increase in his running costs which, as things stand at the moment, he is simply unable to meet. But it is not any such practical consideration which weighs most

heavily upon his mind. What oppresses him most and undermines most seriously his will to act is the consciousness of an inherited guilt which he and others of his generation must expiate (p.20). He is haunted by the sense that his position as landowner rests upon long years of brutal exploitation which now face the inescapable judgement of history. All that is left is to acquiesce in this terrible process of retribution:

> "Unsere Sache steht absolut hoffnungslos. Wir werden zermalmt werden...und das wollen wir auch wünschen." (p.29)

The attempts of Karl-Egon, the central figure in 'Haus Rosenhagen', to transform an inherited way of life are likewise doomed to defeat. Throughout his plans for reform are met with a two-fold opposition which, although seemingly quite separate, are both grounded in the same social-historical situation. They are frustrated in the first place by the irrational, violent hostility of Voss who sees himself as the appointed adversary of the arrogant, greedy Rosenhagen family. The old man is without heir and his hostility to the proposed reforms stems from a blind, unreasoning resentment which has been nourished throughout a life-time's conflict with Karl-Egon's father. The hero's dreams of creating a benign paternal order in which there would be no trace of the brutality and squalor of the past, is impeded, in other words, by Voss, the man who is the product of this past and in whom a sense of outrage and hatred still lives on with unabated fury (p.266).

As in 'Eisgang', the hero's awareness of immediate practical difficulties is greatly aggravated by a serious emotional disruption. As the action of the play develops, Karl-Egon's energy and determination are increasingly undermined by a disabling

experience of sexual frustration. His plans to make his estate a centre of humane, sophisticated existence are inseparably bound up in his own mind with his longing to make the beautiful Hermine his wife. The presence of this elegant, cosmopolitan girl is for him the symbol of a new and happier age, just like the freer forms of management and the re-constructed buildings (p.216). Hermine, however, resists Karl-Egon's plans with all the confidence and resource of a fully emancipated woman. Like Hella she sees marriage as only a part of a total fulfilling way of life. And since (again like Hella) she craves the rich and varying stimulus of city existence, she is appalled at the thought of living in such total seclusion. She professes a sophisticated outlook which acknowledges no finally binding ties or obligations (pp.258ff.).

In his dealings with Hermine, as with Voss, Karl-Egon appears as a man caught between the rival claims of two worlds. Although he has rejected the moral standards and aims of his fathers, he is not free to embrace Hermine on her own terms. In his attempt to reconcile his innate sense of family obligation with his vision of a new age, he is unable to meet the challenge of the two demands which are irresistibly thrust upon him. Possessed as he is by the longing for more responsible relationships between man and man, he is unable to see the implications of his struggle with Voss which is rooted in the past; although he is attracted by the freedom and strength of will of Hermine he can still only conceive his relation with her in a way which implies a negation of her vital spontaneity of spirit. Seen in this light Karl-Egon appears as the victim of a situation the real character and significance of which he is completely unable to grasp. The peculiarly divided nature of his outlook would seem

from this point of view to be closely connected with his basic failure to see his dilemma in the context of an upheaval in which the whole society of his time is involved.[23]

In all of these plays of Halbe, then, the central process of breakdown is clearly related to actual social conditions. The conflict which comes to dislocate the life of the protagonist is seen to reflect serious and far-reaching tensions in the life of a society in the throes of violent transition. He himself, however, is shown to be only partially and vaguely aware of this connection between his own private sense of dilemma and the tensions of corporate experience. Although figures like Paul, Winter and Karl-Egon do at first openly acknowledge that the search for fulfilment which brings them into conflict with accepted conventions, is closely connected with wider changes in social attitudes, they tend, under the pressures of suffering, to withdraw into themselves and see their situation more and more as an essentially private affair with only limited relations to collective experience. This is something which must be stressed. In the course of most of Halbe's plays the tendency of the hero's subjective preoccupations comes increasingly into conflict with the implications of the analytical methods which seem to control the dramatic presentation. When placed within the framework of the general social diagnosis, his view of things appears as partial and confused; his understanding of himself and of his situation appears as limited by his inability to understand his essential dependence upon the controlling processes of his environment.

However we would want to read these plays of Halbe's, whatever the imaginative impulses we would wish to see as predominant in

them, we can never legitimately underrate the force of his analytical insight. Some critics, in my view, have come to a false assessment of his work by dissociating the poetic, visionary tendencies of his outlook from these sceptical, discursive impulses which are their necessary counterpart.[24] The rigorous diagnostic tendency of his imagination can be felt to underlie and inform his work even at its moments of greatest evocative intensity. It is also an aspect of his art on which, as his 'Berliner Brief' shows, he had thought deeply and to which he clearly attached great weight.[25] But even though we allow for its importance and try to evaluate its effects with care, we must also acknowledge that it is not the sole shaping impulse of his creative imagination. This will to explicate and specify is always (although in different ways) in tension with conflicting insights and aspirations. In all of these works written in the course of the 1890's there is a consistent and powerful drive to challenge the final authority of the discursive methods he consistently uses, by revealing contrary modes of connection which impinge upon the seemingly clear-cut empirical processes and demand their re-assessment. This drive, as we have seen, is not uncommon in Naturalist drama. In these plays of Halbe, however, it has a depth which is quite distinctive; it does not (as in those works already discussed) impose itself sporadically and disruptively upon the working of his analytical intelligence, but seems intimately bound up with this as its organic issue and counterpart. To confront this problem is, as I see it, to come face to face with what is most distinctive in Halbe's art.

This two-fold impetus of Halbe's imagination is immediately

unpredictable and seemingly unimportant changes of mood which disrupt the continuity of rational thought, are repeatedly seen in these plays to be caused by the effects of weather, scenery or other factors which do not seem immediately relevant to the preoccupations of the character.[26] But beyond this Halbe is also concerned to relate those kinds of activity in which man claims to be autonomous (as organiser, technician or scientist) to the enclosing rhythms of natural life upon which they, like everything else, finally depend. At the same time he is intent upon substantiating the force of this insight by suggesting that the most decisive experiences of man's life are those that he has in common with animals. In his experiences of love and fear, kinship and death, in which his awareness of his humanity is at its most intense, he participates (it is suggested) in a reality which precedes and transcends the human and which cannot be fully understood in terms of man-made categories of thought. We must look at the force of these suggestions in due course. All I want to suggest at the moment is that they are essential to Halbe's imaginative vision, although they too can claim no undisputed priority. His concern to evoke an awareness of ultimate cosmic processes which elude empirical definition, is allied with an equally powerful impulse to show the life of the individual as dependent upon the working of social forces. The peculiar energy of his work stems from the fact that neither mode of insight can be conclusively refuted in favour of the other; each must be seen as inseparable from the other and as complementary to it. To read his plays is to be forced repeatedly to question each of our provisional certainties in turn and to reverse and reorganise all

apparently clear conclusions.

The nature of the difficulties with which Halbe's plays typically confront us is powerfully revealed in 'Eisgang' (1890), the first work in which his distinctive preoccupations are clearly revealed. In this play we are driven to regard the hero's experience of dilemma in two different and finally irreconcilable ways. We are compelled to see him as overcome by a sense of disaster, the character of which remains obscure. It is noticeable in the first place that throughout the dramatic action Hugo's private experience of hopelessness is closely connected with the disabling inertia which also affects his father and sister.[27] Seen from this point of view it appears as symptomatic of a general decline in vital energy which affects the members of this old family. But at the same time Hugo's experience also seems in some respects quite distinct from that of his father or of his sister. It is informed by an intense visionary force which lends it a unique position in the world of the drama. He alone is tortured by the awareness of a guilt which has grown with the generations and which must now be expiated (pp.2; 29). His inability to take even interim measures to ward off the impending catastrophe, stems from this fatalistic sense that no practical measure can avert or alleviate the coming cataclysm. It is this which prevents him from asserting his authority (which is still widely acknowledged) in a last bid to hold things together and which makes him unable even to contemplate the possibility of gaining new wealth, and thus a possible breathing-space, through a profitable marriage settlement (p.61). But the great intensity of the hero's vision is no proof of its objective truth. It is quite possible to see it as the

imaginative projection of a biologically conditioned sense of fear and guilt, as a sign, that is, of his inability to come to terms with a subliminal sense of inescapable failure. On the other hand, it is also conceivable that this vision does indeed express a prophetic insight into the nature of impending social upheaval; that it does intimate a process of disruption and renewal in the life of society in the light of which the whole action of the drama must be seen.

It is not possible, as I see it, to evaluate fully the dramatic significance of this vision of the hero. And this inability reflects a still more fundamental uncertainty about the nature of the world in which the drama is set, and thus about the meaning of the total dramatic development. For the power which is shown in the end to control man's world, the power embodied in the flood, has no relation to human action and is indeed opaque to all human categories of understanding. It appears as something which simply overwhelms man's powers of thought; under the impact of this terrible happening each individual is thrown back helplessly on to his own deepest preoccupations, and none of these, as far as we can judge, can help us understand the reality of this phenomenon. To Hugo this spectacle of destruction in the natural world is the incontrovertible sign of the judgment which he feels in himself to be inescapable (p.72). This flood which breaks disastrously upon the community is the endorsement of his whole vision of existence. And certainly there is a close correspondence between his visionary anticipation of breakdown and this cataclysm which shatters the life of this rural community. But we must note that it is only Hugo who interprets events in this way and his view, for all its imaginative power, is continually beset by conflicting testimonies

which are equally valid in their own terms and in more obvious agreement with what we can indisputably know of the flood as an empirical event. To those who work towards the reorganisation of communal life the flood appears not as the portent of a higher moral necessity but as the expression of blind a-spiritual force; for them it is a sign of a meaningless destruction (pp.72f.). For it is this which frustrates their carefully laid plans to re-channel the river and thus to put an end to the insecurity which has afflicted the life of the whole district for generations (p.14). This great work was to have brought new prosperity to the whole community and to have made possible a much higher standard of living for the farm workers. In the face of this catastrophe those who had been committed to the idea of progress, see their hopes destroyed and their efforts undone. Far from announcing the advent of a new age it serves, in their eyes, only to reveal the unbreakable hold of the past.

The only thing about this inscrutable event which is clear to all who see it is that it manifests a power to which all men, whatever their ambitions, are finally subject. Whether they see in it the evidence of a higher design or of a blind contingency, they are all alike reduced to awe-struck horror before it. Whatever the constructions which men attempt to put upon it, it remains a mystery before which they must bow. The flood embodies an energy on which all fertility (and therefore life itself) depends, but this energy is beyond man's understanding and control. Seen in the light of this event all his attempts to regulate his own existence are thrown into doubt. As the doctor has proved unable to save the life of the mind and body (pp.41f.), so those who strive

for more efficient methods of agriculture or a more just social system, are now forced to see the emptiness of their dreams. Face to face with the flood they all in their different ways sense the shadow of a terrible futility over their lives.

The ending of 'Eisgang', as I see it, denies us all conclusive certainties; it forces basic questions upon us, which we, like the characters themselves, have no means of answering. But in the context of the dramatic development these questions nonetheless impose themselves irresistibly. The fact that this remorseless outburst of blind natural energy should so dominate the dramatic world is in itself enough to call in question the significance implicitly attributed to the analysis of social processes. It forces us to ask if the life of man, which is subject to such invasions of incalculable power, is after all amenable to positivistic methods of assessment; if the behaviour of man, the creature of this impenetrable world, can be understood basically as a reaction to the pressures of his social environment. These questions, however, are posed by a work which itself uses analytical procedures extensively as a means of valid investigation and which nowhere openly seeks to refute them. As I see it, it is this tendency to invoke a determinist hypothesis, while at the same time challenging its deepest assumptions which is above all characteristic of 'Eisgang'. This same tendency in my view also governs the imaginative conception of all Halbe's plays written in the course of the next decade.

In 'Mutter Erde', 'Die Heimatlosen' and 'Haus Rosenhagen', as also in 'Jugend', the hero is portrayed as an individual who is increasingly obsessed by the consciousness of a nameless antagonism.

In each case he sees himself (like Hugo) as caught up in a process of destiny which cannot be finally explained in terms of purely contingent developments. At the same time, as we have seen, this subjective experience of disruption is shown to be closely connected with crises in the life of society as a whole of which the character himself is not fully aware. The whole tendency of his private sense of exposure is more and more clearly seen to be at odds with the implications of the analytical framework in which the dramatic action seems to be set. How then are we to see this discrepancy? How are we to evaluate the hero's private vision of disaster? What does at least seem certain is that this characteristic awareness of hostility does not stem from any sudden upheaval in his psychic life. It seems in each case to have its root in a primary childhood awareness of estrangement. The developing experience of all these figures is overshadowed by the fearful realisation that to be themselves, they must fight against the destructive force of parental authority and affection. It is this realisation which can be seen to shape the course of their whole emotional development. The first harsh demands of adult life bear in upon a mind already in a state of deep repressed disquiet. This barely hidden sense of exposure is brought to the point of full conscious recognition by a crucial experience of sexual conflict - an experience in which all their nameless fears are somehow gathered up and intensified. In 'Mutter Erde' and especially in 'Haus Rosenhagen' this developing sense of crisis is further heightened by an awareness of conflict in a quite different area of life. In these plays the hero's sense of disorientation is worsened by what he sees as a threat to the lands which are his birth-right and which he feels compelled by some

unreasoning instinct to protect. Now, it is characteristic that the hero himself does not consistently look upon these different kinds of conflict as separate and specific, each with its own distinct causes and appropriate possibilities of resolution. Increasingly his vision of life comes to be governed by the instinctive certainty that they are all in some way mysteriously interrelated: that they are the particular channels through which some inscrutable force of compulsion is working itself out. We can never in my view be fully certain that the hero's experience of antagonism represents more than a feeling of absolute dereliction brought about by the fact that these single experiences of conflict are thrust simultaneously upon him. The link may only be in his own mind; the sense of fate may just be an index of the force with which these coinciding tensions (each relative and specific) progressively disrupt the stability of the self. And certainly the hero's general unconcern about the conditions under which the crisis in his life comes into being, his refusal to take seriously the social dimensions of his experience, would seem to confirm the deterministic view of the hero as a stricken, uncomprehending victim: as a being whose imagination recoils from the sheer contingency of the forces by which he is destroyed.

But if the particularising, analytical tendency in the dramatic presentation succeeds in calling in question the hero's subjective vision of experience, it is equally true that the validity of the diagnostic method is itself progressively thrown into doubt by conflicting structures of suggestion which are also integral to the dramatic statement. In all these plays - although in rather different ways - the struggles within the family, like the

struggle for sexual and territorial dominance, are closely related to tensions in the world of nature. The force of this consistent imaginative association is to suggest the depth and ambiguity of the impulses activating the dramatic figures and thus, by implication at least, to question all reductive attempts to define them solely in terms of socially compelled reactions. The impetus of these evocative procedures is, in short, to enlarge the scope of the dramatic world, and in so doing to lend the characters, potentially at least, an almost mythical stature.

This attempt to present human experience as part of the enclosing order of nature takes different forms in these plays of Halbe's. In 'Eisgang', as in the later work 'Der Strom', the informing view of the violence of natural existence is directly enacted in the spectacle of man's ultimate exposure to natural forces which forms the climax of the dramatic development.[28] The apprehension of the cruelty, resentment and fear which set one individual against another is held in touch with a sense of the harshness of the world in which man's life is placed and in which he, like other organisms, must struggle ceaselessly for survival. In 'Mutter Erde' and 'Haus Rosenhagen', on the other hand, nature is seen by most of the figures as a benign and orderly realm. This general assurance, however, is increasingly offset by the hero's emergent sense of its mysterious, unrelenting power. Both these plays are set in a landscape of great beauty which often enthrals and consoles those who regard it and inspires in them a belief in the essential stability of life. At the beginning of both works the hero himself seems to share this view of the natural world as a creative order in which man has a rightful place.[29] Karl-Egon and

Paul both tend at first to look upon nature as a harmonious sphere which can direct the individual's understanding of existence.[30] Both tend to see it in opposition to the alienating patterns of life embodied in the man-made world of the city. Such superficial confidence, however, is gradually shown to be at odds with the hero's own tense, haunted childhood experience of nature - an awareness which they are forced more and more fully to confront in the dramatic present.

In 'Haus Rosenhagen' Karl Egon's belief in man's ability to create his destiny in an ordered, responsive world is progressively drawn into conflict with his recognition of nature as a sphere of naked, warring energies. In the specific circumstances in which he is caught up, he comes to see the manifestation of a destructive power which has no contingent cause. He struggles stubbornly to resist Wegner's view of the conflict between the Rosenhagen family and Voss as a blind, animal struggle which can only end in the death of one of the contestants (p.206). He also refuses to accept his father's insistence that he must either kill their enemy or be himself destroyed (p.210f.). But however hard he struggles to subdue the force of these suggestions, they have already gained entry to his unconscious mind. The very horror of his reactions shows that his imagination is already yielding to a nightmare sense of his involvement in a deadly struggle for survival.

The force of this disorientating awareness is aggravated by a complementary insight from another quarter. He is driven more and more to realise that his relationship with Hermine, in which he had sought emotional support, is itself the vehicle of a conflict which is equally destructive. Throughout the play this beautiful,

elusive creature is associated in Karl-Egon's mind with the archetypal image of the chaste, relentless huntress (pp.226; 229; cf. p.223). The effect of her every word and gesture upon him seems to be closely bound up with this pervading impression. Her desire to provoke him into open dispute by emphasising the limits of her attachment to him, by inciting him to revoke his family inheritance and by simply asserting her power over him - this impresses itself with dislocating force upon a mind already gripped by an obsessive awareness of conflict.[31] It is noticeable in particular that her calculated concern to describe their relationship as an extension of the ceaseless struggle for life which pervades the animal world has an almost transfixing effect upon him which he is quite unable to rationalise to himself(p.232). This is characteristic. The impact of the breakdown of this relationship cannot be explained in terms of sexual disappointment alone; its coercive force stems rather from the way in which it is assimilated to his unconscious mind: from the fact that it is intuitively apprehended not as an isolated event but as part of an intensifying process of hostility.

Only if we postulate this subliminal sense of compulsion can we understand the disintegrating effect of his realisation that his cousin Martha has betrayed him (p.267). Throughout he had placed his implicit trust in this girl whom he regarded, in contrast to Hermine, as the very image of affectionate, self-effacing devotion. Her confession that it was she who deliberately incited Voss to renew his violence in order to thwart Karl-Egon's plans to marry Hermine, fills him with an overwhelming sense of hopelessness. This act, so unexpected in itself, comes as the ultimate

confirmation of some nightmare certainty which has come to possess his mind. It does not change his external situation, but it precipitates a final inner surrender. The fact that Martha too is lethally involved in this engulfing struggle for power seems to confirm his sense that there can be no escape: that the destructiveness he has seen is not simply the work of single individuals but inherent in the nature of life itself. It is in this state of mind that he goes out and surrenders himself to the fury of Voss (p.269).

Paul Warkentin, the hero of 'Mutter Erde' is also portrayed as a man whose seeming confidence in the orderliness of life is consistently refuted by an underlying apprehension of chaos. In his disenchantment with the false sophistication of city life and the distorted human relationships which it begets, he tends to see the rustic world as a harmonious, unspoilt realm in which he can find renewal of spirit. In a life submitted to the creative rhythms of nature he believes that he can regain an energy of hope and purpose which has been gradually eroded in his barren existence in Berlin (pp. 319ff.). From the beginning, however, this nostalgia is shown to be in conflict with an intuitive childhood sense of man's exposure to natural forces, as these are revealed in the darkness of the animal world and in the equally obscure violence of man's primitive instincts. His longing for a life at one with nature does not grow out of this deepest awareness but is conditioned by the pressures of a severe emotional crisis from which he is unconsciously in retreat. This image of a simple life is born of a revulsion from the refined, self-sufficient idealism of his wife Hella and from the purposive, intellectualised outlook

which she represents (pp.372ff.). By changing his circumstances he believes that it is possible to begin again.

In 'Mutter Erde', as in 'Haus Rosenhagen', the inner development of the hero is reflected in his gradual rejection of his illusory sense of freedom. As he re-enters more fully into the world of his childhood he is forced to confront anew his earliest recognition of the violent impenetrable forces which underlie the seemingly placid order of rural life. This extensive confrontation with the repressed vision of childhood takes place at a level of impulse and intuition which is never fully accessible to conscious thought. In his meeting with old acquaintances at his father's funeral (as in his first entry into his childhood home) he is overcome by some undefined sense of constraint of which he can give no adequate account.[32] Here, that feeling of abandonment which had overshadowed his earliest years begins to regain its hold over him. In his renewed association with Antoinette, the girl whom he had deserted years before, this sense of subjection increasingly gains in strength and at the same time comes more and more fully to penetrate the workings of his conscious mind. In his realisation that she, like him, has been condemned to a life of loneliness and deprivation, that she too has been exploited and abused, he becomes aware of a mysterious bond between them (pp.334ff.). He seems moved above all by the unsuspected likeness of their destinies and by the re-convergence of their lives which had seemed insuperably divided. In the light of this evolving recognition his consciousness of his own suffering and of his whole situation is gradually transformed. He becomes more and more possessed by the sense of a pattern in his life of which he had been unaware and thus of a power of necessity

which had been hidden from his sight (pp.334ff.).

In this process of deepening insight the meeting with Laskowski, Antoinette's husband, has a crucial, precipitative importance. Coinciding as it does with his growing insight into the self-centred aggression of Hella, this meeting with this brutal, calculating man seems to clarify his growing consciousness of the helplessness of those who seek to love (pp.346ff.). Certainly, the contact with this man who is driven by a sole desire to possess and enslave, has an immensely demoralising effect on Paul. This man who has ruthlessly broken the spirit of Antoinette and who is now intent on gaining hold of the Warkentin lands, seems to personify for him some power of evil which threatens his very existence (pp.346ff.). As is so often the case in these plays, the effect of this experience stems not from its practical implications but from the hidden significance which it acquires in the underground life of the hero's imagination. Here again an incident, unimportant in itself, presents itself to the subjective mind as the compelling symbol of a truth already dimly felt.

Here, as in 'Haus Rosenhagen', it is impossible to give a detailed account of this process of spiritual breakdown. It is evident that some ultimate act of surrender takes place in the affective life of the hero which he himself cannot fully understand or report and which is reflected only, fitfully and confusedly, in the compulsive associations of his distraught imagination. But whatever the nature of these decisive developments in the unconscious, it can be seen to result in an experience of overwhelming powerlessness. We can clearly distinguish the different areas of experience in which his awareness of antagonism comes into being

but we cannot see at all clearly how they are related. Certainly, we may feel quite clear about the connection between the despairing intensity of Paul's reawakened love for Antoinette and his consciousness of the driving egotism of Hella and Laskowski. But it is not possible to say with any certainty how these experiences are bound up with his underlying awareness of abandonment and of the mysterious governing power of nature. This decisive process of association develops in a region of the mind so far removed from the conscious self-understanding of the character that it remains largely incommunicable. We have no means of knowing the exact conditions under which it comes into being, and thus of understanding its actual character; we cannot know if this activity of the imagination is shaped by some subliminal impulse to protect the self from an unbearable sense of blind contingency, or whether it does in fact represent a genuine imaginative insight into the nature of human life. What, however, is beyond all doubt is the effect of this insight upon the protagonists. Here (as in 'Haus Rosenhagen') they are overcome by the realisation of an inescapable entrapment. There is for Paul and Antoinette no question of starting again in another place; they make no attempt to rebel against the particular circumstances which bind them (pp.386f.). Their consciousness of love is felt simply to be at odds with the nature of the world as they have come to know it. Their acceptance of death as the only way out is not attended by any sense of uncertainty or confusion. For both of them it stems from the acknowledgement of a necessity which is inscrutable but to which they are absolutely subject.

At first sight 'Die Heimatlosen' seems to bear little resemblance to the two works just discussed. It is set in Berlin

and the characters themselves show little real concern with the world of nature. There are certainly references enough to weather and season, but these lack the shaping, pervading quality which such references generally have in Halbe's other plays. Indeed the basic tendency of city life, as it is portrayed here, is to create a mode of existence in which men can disregard as never before the interchange of day and night, summer and winter.[33] Yet throughout the play it is noticeable that the life of this advanced, highly organised society which seems so greatly to reduce man's dependence upon the natural order, is consistently and variously illuminated by means of analogies with the animal world. Individuals of such different outlooks as Degenhardt, Regina and Döhring, who have all struggled to come to terms with life in the great city, are agreed that it is an arena of ceaseless, violent conflict.[34] Behind its casual, permissive forms they all see a lethal struggle for survival in which only the strong and brutal can hope to prevail. Whatever the liberal pretensions of the city-dweller, as Regina declares, they are in the end only impressed by the show of naked force (pp.204; 277).

Although the immediate situation of Lotte Burwig differs in many ways from that of Halbe's other protagonists, the course of her spiritual development is strikingly similar. She, like Paul and Karl-Egon, is forced to see the underlying horror of a world in which she had sought refuge. At the beginning of the play she too appears as an individual in recoil from a disabling childhood awareness of oppressed isolation (p.237). Seeking to reject the memory of bitter family conflict in the claustrophobic atmosphere of a small provincial town, she flees to Berlin in the hope of finding a

freedom she has never known - freedom to create her own way of life and to form her own emotional attachments (p.209).

But it is in this attempt to establish her independence that she, like Halbe's other figures, is brought face to face with the recognition of an absolute exposure which she has tried to evade. Driven by a haunting sense of guilt and by a fear of isolation, she falls more and more fully under the influence of the proud, aggressive Döhring in whom she senses the free assertive strength for which she yearns (pp.242f., 254). As her dependence upon him grows, however, she becomes increasingly aware that this strength stems from the singlemindedness of his search for fulfilment, and that it implies a total indifference to the needs and sufferings of others. In the end, when she is forced to realise that Döhring in his relentless search has ignored her despairing plea for help, she is overcome by a terrible feeling of weakness. This relationship in which she had looked for release from the devouring memory of the past, becomes for her the confirmation of an unspoken terror (pp.272f.). As her father had been destroyed by the implacable force of her mother's compelling will, so she now senses in herself her submission to the same overwhelming hostile force against which she has no defence (pp.283f.).

As in those plays just discussed, the process of inner collapse takes place beyond the range of direct communication. It is only rarely and briefly that the heroine is seen at grips with the experience of disintegration within, and at these times it is, above all, the distraught inertia and unresponsiveness of her mind which is in evidence (pp.274ff.). Here again the crucial psychic development is elusively reflected in the associative processes of the heroine's

imagination. Throughout the play it is noticeable that she is drawn to Döhring by the instinctive awareness of a vital, militant energy in him which is almost completely lacking in her other male acquaintances.[35] It is as a huntsman, soldier and adventurer that he has impressed himself upon her imagination and come to dominate her deepest sexual feelings.[36] In the early stages of the action this awareness of aggressive masculinity awakens in her a feeling of excitement and elation from which she seems to derive a new self-confidence and vitality. In the fourth act, in the decisive encounter at the fancy-dress ball, a sharp break in her emotional responses becomes apparent. Here for the first time she seems to be overcome by a terrifying certainty that this sexual power of Döhring's is in fact a hostile force which will destroy her. This crucial development in awareness seems to be in some way released by the sight of her lover in the costume of a violent backwoods-man armed with a pistol and a knife (p.259). All his actions, none of which are in themselves unusual or finally decisive, seem to acquire in Lotte's eyes a force of undefined menace. Particularly in his instinctive desire to expose her to the anguish of an impotent jealousy she feels herself irresistibly drawn into an open conflict upon which her life itself depends. Barely conscious of her actions, she seizes the knife which he provocatively displays and makes to kill him. But even at this moment, when he is completely in her power, she senses in his look of fearless defiance some strength of will to which she is not equal. Although he refuses to defend himself, she is unable to deal the fatal blow and falls in utter exhaustion before him (p.273).

Lotte's suicide is presented as the consummation of this

instinctive act of surrender. Her death is seen as simply confirming this prior breakdown of spirit. The heroine herself does not seem to have any clear awareness of this process and certainly none of those around her suspect the ultimate seriousness of what has happened to her. Everything she says seems to indicate that she is suffering from a bout of depression which, although grave enough, can be overcome. To those who try in vain to help her and win her confidence, her suicide comes without warning, as if carried out on a sudden impulse. Her behaviour reveals nothing of that nightmare sense of absolute exposure which has come to take possession of her unconscious mind.

What is most striking about the catastrophe of all these plays from 'Eisgang' to 'Die Heimatlosen' is its hidden, ambiguous character. The sense of despair which overwhelms the hero does not seem to be determined by his circumstances themselves but rather by his vision of these circumstances as part of the enclosing order of nature. The significance of this vision, however, remains consistently open to question. Nature in its various manifestations is certainly presented as a power which presides over all human actions. But at the same time it is the hero himself under the pressure of severe suffering who intuitively establishes these connections between his own life and the encompassing developments in the natural world. There is no final certainty that the power which he sees embodied in the processes of nature is indeed akin to that which determines his own existence. But this having been said we must go on to acknowledge that the presentation of nature in these plays seems calculated to sustain (potentially at least) the hero's view of his own destiny. The natural world, as

it is portrayed here, does indeed appear to correspond to the protagonist's vision of a sphere in which only vital organisms, those best equipped to resist and destroy, can survive; in which, that is, creative order is maintained by the power of the strong over the weak. His tendency to universalise his experience of overwhelming weakness does, in other words, find a response in the view of nature which is established independently of his own subjective insights. It is this sense of natural order which is evoked by the constant emphasis upon conflict as the activating principle of animal existence; and it is this sense which underlies the timeless peasant consciousness of the bondage of the individual, of his inability to resist the flux of natural process, which is recurrently expressed in all these plays. It is noticeable that the death of the hero is constantly set in connection with such expressions of immemorial folk-wisdom. In 'Eisgang' and 'Der Strom' the protagonists' experience of defeat is intimately bound up with legendary remembrances of dissolution and renewal in the natural world.[37] Similarly in 'Haus Rosenhagen' Karl-Egon's sense of surrender is closely linked with his grandmother's apprehension of family decline in the autumnal world.[38] In 'Mutter Erde' the lovers' anticipation of death is likewise filled with the sense that a cycle of life in the natural world has come to an end. Their final decision is accompanied by the sound of the local workers joyously driving out the dying year, confident in the coming miracle of renewal.[39]

In all of these plays, then, the death of the hero is set in a context which emphasises the creative continuity of natural life. But although this association has great suggestive force, it is not

possible to assess its meaning with any certainty. To some extent it does certainly serve to confirm the hero's tendency to see his life as part of the processes of nature and thus to suggest a link between his own personal vision and the world of the drama as a whole. But it does not, as I see it, establish this link with an authority clear and commanding enough to make it a centre of imaginative certainty in terms of which we might interpret the whole dramatic statement. It is only in 'Der Strom' in which Halbe had largely abandoned a consistently realistic form in favour of a freer, more openly poetic mode, that the death of the protagonist is openly attributed a social significance. Here the death of Peter in the flood is expressly acclaimed as a sacrificial act which guarantees the continuity of communal life (p.347). In 'Eisgang', 'Mutter Erde' and 'Haus Rosenhagen', on the other hand, despite the emphasis upon the cyclical character of natural development, no explicit connection is made between the death of the hero and the anticipated regeneration in the natural world. Even the hero himself, who may well perceive some such connection, nowhere gives it expression.

In the light of these considerations it is possible to look again at 'Jugend', Halbe's most popular and controversial play, and to re-define its position in his work as a whole. The conception of this drama was governed by a specific social concern which was never again to exercise such control over his imagination. Here the determining forces of the dramatic action are related to concrete social circumstances with a directness and a clarity which are untypical of the plays written later in the decade. 'Jugend' seems to articulate a severely deterministic vision of individual

lives in the grip of environmental forces over which they have no control, brought into a collision which no-one desires or understands. The attempt to register the unique individuality of each dramatic agent can be seen to subserve this central deterministic impulse. The concern to grasp the differences in outlook, habit and expectation which distinguish each figure from every other, is controlled by a sense of the individual's dependence upon those specific impersonal pressures which have moulded his self-awareness and made him what he is. The imprisoning power of his own experience of life as it has evolved over the years, is shown to be so great that it seriously limits his ability to respond to the reality of other lives impelled by different fears and aspirations. The particularising method, in other words, is used to expound a view of the pre-determined isolation of the dramatic figures, of their necessary misunderstanding and mistrust of one another.

But this is not all. In 'Jugend' determinist insight is charged with a tense social indignation which is equally uncharacteristic of Halbe's later plays. The analysis of the forces which bring the dramatic figures into collision, is articulated in a way which implies a sweeping indictment of contemporary social morality. The whole play is informed by a sense of the destructiveness of specific moral attitudes - attitudes which are moreover seen as stemming from basic tendencies in collective experience which are not fully conscious. The diagnosis of the failure of the different relationships is fired by a desire to show in the life of nineteenth century society a compelling will to evade and subvert the reality of sensual experience. In the contemporary world, as it appears here, man is thrust from

childhood into a revolt against the primary energies of his own nature.

The impetus of this social indictment is most immediately evident in a strong anti-clerical bias apparent throughout the play. There is a consistent attempt to show conventional spirituality as dependent upon emotional failure or deprivation. The two priests, Gregor and Hoppe, who seem in every respect so unlike one another, are both seen to have been drawn into the Church by an overwhelming experience of sexual disappointment. The underlying energies of Gregor's doctrinaire, ascetic outlook are ironically disclosed in his own account of his impoverished thwarted youth in which his deepest ambitions, professional and sexual, were gradually destroyed by a lack of opportunity (pp.158f.). The link between this governing experience of privation and his fanatical piety is immediately obvious to the spectator but it is necessarily hidden from the character himself, whose ferocious commitment to the Church (as becomes increasingly clear) serves precisely to hide this awareness of failure from his conscious mind. The vehemence of his overweening, dogmatic faith, far from revealing genuine conviction, serves to show the extent to which his self-awareness is governed by subliminal compulsions over which he has no rational control.

With Hoppe too the acceptance of the celibate life is shown to be an escape from extreme emotional hardship. His entry into the priesthood is also determined by a youthful experience of financial hardship which, in his case, is intensified by that of a painful sexual betrayal. On one level it is seen to be dictated by poverty, on another by an unconfessed desire to escape from the tensions of erotic expectation. Unlike Gregor, however, Hoppe is conscious of

the loss of love and is still able to relive the bitterness of his youthful disappointment (pp.164ff.). His protective love of Annchen and Amandus, the children of his dead sister, is fraught with an open sense of regret that he has been denied the joy of fatherhood, while his peculiar affection for Hans, the son of the woman who betrayed him, is instinct with the memory of a love which might have been his.[40] But despite a marked tendency to melancholia, there is no bitterness in Hoppe. He appears as a man who has come to terms with his lot and who has learnt over the years to express his deep affections in his love for the children in his care and in a paternal concern for the suffering human beings with whom he is daily in contact. That he has thus succeeded in preserving his decency and benevolence is seen as a tribute to the strength of his inherent humanity and not to the creative power of his office as priest. The warmth of his nature is such, we are given to believe, that it is able to transform this barren, lonely life into a source of real benevolence and sympathy.

This diagnosis of the celibate life as an unconscious evasion of the tensions of sexual experience is intimately bound up with the presentation of the relationship between Annchen and Hans which is at the centre of dramatic interest. For this abhorrence of the sexual which is reflected (we are told) in the traditional teaching of the Church, is shown to be operative in less obvious ways in all the agencies and attitudes through which the collective will of society is enforced. The disorder which is revealed in the development of this relationship between the two young lovers, is seen to stem from their involvement in a world dominated by an unspoken concern to subordinate the power of sexual love to other standards

of value. This encounter is disfigured from the very start by a confusion of feeling on both sides which is disclosed as the direct consequence of social influences. It is characteristic that Annchen, despite the forebearing love of her uncle, should have grown up so utterly obsessed by the awareness of her illegitimate birth. Her childhood experience has been overshadowed by the consciousness of her mother's failure and by the inarticulate sense of the treachery of sexual relationships. These preoccupations have led in turn to a still more deep-lying and destructive fear of some irreparable flaw in her own make-up which will one day drive her to repeat the shameful failure of her mother.[41] In this crisis of consciousness the dramatist is concerned to show the effect of the whole tendency of her education. The teaching she has received in Church and school (it is suggested) has induced in her the unquestioning belief that sexual misdemeanour is the most profound and far-reaching of crimes - a crime which, as in her mother's case, brings with it the threat of total spiritual destruction.

This alienation of the heroine from her own vital, sensuous nature is most forcibly revealed in her susceptibility to the influence of Gregor. The fact that she is ready to contemplate seriously the possibility of entering a convent is seen as proof of the extent to which her own understanding of herself has become divorced from the deepest, motive energies of her existence (pp.138f.). It is in this false aspiration that she appears most clearly as the victim of an oppressive doubt which has been thrust upon her by the concerted pressures of her environment.

Hans Hartwig, the other central figure in 'Jugend', is presented in much the same terms as a victim of social prejudices. Although

his childhood, in comparison with Annchen's, has been secure and his development by conventional standards successful, he nonetheless also appears as an individual maimed by an intense emotional confusion. His meeting with Annchen, far from releasing him from the grip of this inner tension, has the effect of bringing it to a violent crisis. This crisis is shown (as in the case of Annchen) to have its roots in an involuntary dependence upon the prevailing standards of society. His adolescent experience, as he himself is now beginning to understand, has been conditioned by his subjection to a rigid, abstemious mode of discipline which is calculated to suppress sexual awareness (pp.158ff.). What he himself, however, is clearly unable to understand is the effect which this prolonged deprivation has had upon the whole process of his psychic development: the extent to which it has severed his conscious experience from the springs of his affective life. It is above all the nature of this inner division which is revealed in this first tense, precarious experience of fulfilment. For this new sense of elation which possesses him, is always fraught with doubt and even despair.[42] These violent contradictory reactions are presented as the telling symptoms of an emotional contradiction of which the character himself has no clear, conscious knowledge. Hans' search for passionate fulfilment and his emergent awareness of the responsibility this entails, are seen as confronting him with demands to which he is unable to respond. He is unable (or unwilling) to face the realisation that they imply a sense of purpose and value which is at odds with that which has come to govern his understanding of life. The character of Annchen's love, as it is portrayed here, is simply incompatible with the sense of his own

self which has been imperceptibly imposed upon him by the world in which he lives. It becomes increasingly clear that his response to love is disturbed by images of fulfilment, expectations which, although forged in conscious revolt against an oppressive middle-class world, yet in their very conventionality reveal the depth of his unacknowledged dependence upon it (pp.148; 158ff.).

It is really this disparity in the reactions of Annchen and Hans which is the source of the profound unacknowledged tension between them. For Annchen love is a transforming force which integrates all her deepest emotional energies and frees her from the grip of imposed fears and false desires (pp.176f.). For Hans, on the other hand, it brings no such release. It thrusts him into a turmoil which he cannot understand and from which he can find no escape. This disconnection between the two lovers embodies, as I see it, a potentially tragic situation. It is a situation which presupposes the dramatist's sensitive and involved concern with the position of the individual in contemporary society, one repeatedly negotiated in the drama of the time but seldom realised with such a fine awareness of elusive, ambiguous feelings and of their connections with habituated modes of thought.

The presentation of the crisis in 'Jugend' clearly makes specific and, it would seem, limiting demands upon the spectator's imagination. Yet to note the social character of the dilemma, however sensitively, is not enough. Certainly, we must attend very closely to these carefully articulated processes of diagnosis and respond fully to the quality of pathos which this view of socially enforced suffering entails. But to be true to the complexity of the total dramatic statement we must also acknowledge other forms of

imaginative suggestion which cannot be accommodated within a strictly positivistic framework. Here, as also in 'Frühlings Erwachen', the revelation of the severe and complex methods by which society has attempted to restrict the expression of sexual energy, serves to suggest the immense potential force of this energy. More particularly, it suggests that modern man, for all the security of his material life, still fears the power of the sexual to disrupt and release - to undermine his rational search for an ordered, stable existence. But of more direct significance is the fact that in the drama itself it is sexual experience which is shown to have a finally controlling power. Whether, as with Hans and Anna, it appears as an immediate propelling force which disrupts inculcated responses or, as with Gregor and Hoppe, as an energy which finds devious and indirect expression, it is revealed in both cases as the force which really activates the psychic life of the individual. In both cases it is shown to be a force which can be diverted or temporarily repressed, but which cannot be finally subjected. As the action of the play unfolds, it is revealed more and more clearly as a pervading hidden energy which undercuts differences in individual experience. All the characters, whatever their situation, are shown to be driven by an inarticulate need for something more, for some fulfilment beyond the relative satisfaction of their actual experience. Whatever the degree of their conditioning, they are all impelled by some force of aspiration which is not in keeping with their conscious understanding of their own selves. It is noticeable that this vitalising power in the different characters is released and intensified by their intuitive awareness of the heightened movements of life in the spring countryside. It is this

awareness which induces a strange disquiet in Gregor, which he could not have foreseen even a few days before. Its disturbing effect is seen in his attempt to gain the sympathy of Anna by means of his intimate confession and by his inability to resist the temptation to dance with her (p.168). A similar sense of unfocussed longing can be seen in Hoppe's wistful reflections:

> "Hörst du, wie die Drossel pfeift im Garten? Da draussen der Frühling, der ist jung geblieben. Aber man selbst ist alt und grau." (p.160)

The emotions of the younger characters are also in some way quickened by their instinctive responsiveness to the natural world. This is most strikingly evident in the reactions of Amandus, Anna's simple-minded half-brother. As the opening stage-direction makes clear, this is a being who is still almost completely governed by impulse and whose feelings are marked by an almost animalic simplicity. At the beginning of the play a direct connection is suggested between the restlessness of the chickens which invade the garden, and the turmoil of this retarded youth. There is, as Annchen notes, an unusual intensity about all he does:

> "Frühjahr...Weg ist der Bengel, hast ihn nicht gesehen" (p.128)

Whether he is discovering the first radish of the year, or waiting for the birth of the calf, or trying to come to terms with his sense of attraction to the kitchen-maid, he seems to be in the grip of a puzzling feeling of expectancy which upsets the usual balance of his life.[43] In this perturbed state it is inevitable that his sense of relationship with his sister should also be greatly intensified. She is the centre of his emotional life; it is to her that he turns unquestioningly in his search for affection and reassurance

(pp.151f.). With this first awakening of his sexual feelings his dependence on this relationship (as the incident with the radish is meant to show (pp.131ff.)) also gains a new urgency. It is at this point that Hans, the demanding outsider, arrives. Suddenly the certainty of his sister's love, which is the basis of his whole existence, seems destroyed and he is exposed to tortured feelings of jealousy which he has never known before. In this simple-minded boy some conflict is released which is the more terrible for being so completely incomprehensible to him and to those from whom he expects help.

The confrontation between the dramatic figures in 'Jugend' is played out in the context of the developing life of nature. This is the essential medium of the action. In it, motives which seem on the surface very different, are shown to have their origin in a sphere of impulse which all the characters share with one another. When set in this medium, the conflict between particularised individuals which seems at one level fully explicable in terms of definable social influences, appears as the eruption of primitive impelling forces which underlie all human experience. Characters who from one point of view had appeared as differentiated from one another by the pressures of their social experience, seem in this light to be inseparably united by their common involvement in one transcendent process of life. In this light connections which in the determinist scheme had seemed unimportant, take on a new shaping significance. If we look beyond the obvious superficial differences, it is evident, for instance, that the sense of threat which overcomes Amandus in the presence of Hans, is also experienced by Gregor; the only real difference is in the way it is expressed.

His fanatical condemnation of Hans is seen to stem not from real spiritual concern but from a desire to discountenance him in the eyes of Annchen and to break his hold upon her.[44] This, like his attempts to persuade her to become a nun, appears as part of an increasingly frenzied effort to keep a place in her life, to retain his influence upon her. And in this he is just like Amandus. Both men blindly pursue the same end, each by the only means at his disposal. Both struggle, largely unconsciously, to retain their hold upon her by keeping her out of reach of potential suitors.[45]

This primitive sexual struggle is played out on a level of blind instinctive reaction which is nowhere directly expressed. Indeed, as Halbe presents it, each character is driven precisely to disguise from himself the true nature of the conflict in which he is caught up. Hans, it is true, does sense in Gregor's attitude a force of direct challenge, although he does not stop to consider this feeling (p.150). He does not, however, suspect the very real hatred which underlies Amandus' seemingly childish masquerading with his gun. This is thoroughly characteristic. Here, as throughout the play, each figure is so absorbed in his own experience of upheaval, that he is unable to sense the force of a like turmoil in the lives of others. None of them as a result is aware of the intensity of the hatred which has come into being and of the catastrophic possibility which it entails.

The spectator, on the other hand, does gain some sense of this underlying hostility although its actual character and influence remain obscure. It is apparent only as a force of disruption which is shown more and more clearly to be at work in all the different associations which make up the dramatic world. Both the relationships

between Annchen and the male figures by whom she is surrounded, and the relationships between these male figures themselves, seem charged by some impetus of conflict which none of the individual characters can hope to control. Throughout the play the search for love is seen as the primary impulse of the individual's existence, the only source of real fulfilment; yet within the terms of the dramatic action this impulse is shown to be doomed to seemingly inevitable frustration. In the different generations this process of breakdown is consistently re-enacted. In the betrayal of Annchen's mother, in the deprivation of Hoppe, in the tormented loneliness of Gregor and Amandus, a tendency to disconnection is revealed which is most fully portrayed in the estrangement between the two young lovers. When seen as part of this comprehensive pattern of foiled relationships, the mutual incomprehension between Hans and Annchen acquires a fuller and more perplexing significance.

In the same way the opposition between the male figures is more and more clearly disclosed as a force of such violence that it cannot be easily accommodated to our awareness of social causality. Sexual rivalry has a central importance in the dramatic action, although it is never openly discussed. The life of Hoppe, as of Annchen's mother, has been decisively determined by the fact that he has been displaced in the affections of someone he loved. And now in the dramatic present in the threefold relationship between Hans, Gregor and Amandus, a primitive hostility is unleashed which seems to acquire a momentum quite independent of the conscious desires of the characters themselves. Inevitably, it is in Amandus, in whom the force of inculcated standards of behaviour is least developed, that

the disruptive effects of these subliminal tensions are most clearly revealed. When seen in the context of this cumulative process of suggestion, his desire to kill Hans has a real basis in the total conception of the drama which has generally been overlooked. His blind, compulsive attempt to destroy the intruder and so regain the security of his former life can be seen to express a violence which is inherent in the dramatic situation but which remains generally out of reach of the conscious experience of the characters. The hatred which here comes to the surface is not unique; it is equally apparent in the devious, barely controlled fury of Gregor.

In forcing us to respond to this suggestion of primitive impulses at work in apparently commonplace relationships, the dramatist is eliciting an awareness of human experience as something essentially mysterious and impenetrable. Halbe himself was obviously convinced that he had realised a sense of latent destructiveness which was strong (and palpable) enough to sustain a catastrophe which might seem improbable in the context of a purely analytical preoccupation. The fact that Amandus is the agent of the final disaster did not (as many contemporary critics insisted) necessarily invalidate it. On the contrary, he seems to have felt that this retarded figure, abnormally dependent upon instinct, was especially suited to reveal in his murderous outburst the nature of the forces controlling the development of the dramatic action throughout. This brings us to the real crux of the matter. If we read the play as an analysis of socially determined processes and accept the categories of verisimilitude which this entails, then the catastrophe must appear as a freakish accident which distorts the development of a closely integrated causal sequence. If, on the

other hand, we admit the suggestion of the shared exposure of the dramatic figures to irrational forces in themselves and in the world around, then we are also acknowledging the working of a different kind of necessity which can be imaginatively perceived but not exhaustively understood. On this plane the unreasoning act of Amandus (it seems to me) can indeed be grasped in the way which the dramatist intends: as the final eruption of a violence which can be felt to pervade the dramatic world but the real character of which remains hidden.

No attempt to understand the problems of Naturalist drama in Germany can bypass the ending of 'Jugend'.[46] It exemplifies, clearly and defiantly, the search for synthesis which is apparent not only in all of Halbe's plays but also (in one way or another) in many of the most ambitious dramas of the time. In this most controversial of endings we can see that characteristic attempt of the Naturalist drama to surpass analytical methods without at the same time relinquishing the concern to diagnose the working of social forces. In 'Jugend' this attempt to fuse different tendencies of artistic insight is, as I see it, singularly daring and sustained by a genuinely creative energy which is rare in the drama of the 1890's.

This is in my view Halbe's finest play. It is both more ambitious and more nearly completely successful than any of his other works. Nowhere else in his dramas are the tensions counterposed with such uncompromising directness. In 'Jugend' the awareness of the characters' involvement in a specific social situation is defined with a precision which he did not achieve (or seek to

achieve) again; at the same time, the awareness of the depth and ambiguity of human experience is richer and more challenging than elsewhere because it is fully derived from the vision of a situation which remains essentially commonplace and recognisable. Here we are repeatedly drawn to acknowledge the elusiveness of feelings which we, like the characters themselves, tend to take for granted. This seems to me to be characteristic of the peculiar achievement of Naturalist works at their best. Here, as also for instance, in 'Das Friedensfest' or 'Rose Bernd', the analytical method is used to reveal the seeming contingency of the individual consciousness, but in so doing it serves paradoxically to suggest a dimension of mystery in those very aspects of experience which had seemed open to total explanation.

## (4) Hauptmann's Domestic Tragedies

In recent years critics have shown themselves remarkably reluctant to see Hauptmann's early work in the context of the literary developments in the late nineteenth century. They have generally been so overwhelmingly convinced that he was not a Naturalist in any real sense that they have not thought it worth while to enquire into the character of Naturalism as a literary movement or to explore in any detail the relations between his work and the drama of the time. John Osborne's study is the first for a long time to declare that Hauptmann's early plays are essentially Naturalist in conception and that they can only be really understood within the context of contemporary literary developments.[1] This claim, however, has been made in the face of the remarkably concerted assertions of Hauptmann criticism over the past few decades. It is now more than fifty years since Freyhan brilliantly exposed the inadequacies of the conventional view of Hauptmann's dramatic realism and well over forty since Langner drew attention to the genuinely visionary energy informing the conception of even his early work.[2] These studies seemed to provide the impetus for Hauptmann criticism for years to come. In the post-war period commentators like Emrich, Guthke, Alexander and Schrimpf have all been concerned to show a basic continuity between the conception of the so-called Naturalist works and that of the later mythical plays and to interpret this as a proof of the essential timelessness of his creative vision.[3] The image of the dramatist which emerges from these studies, is that of a dynamic, original artist who evolved in accordance with the mysterious laws

of his own creative temperament and remained largely untouched by social and literary fashions.

There can be no doubt that we owe a very great deal to these critical studies of Hauptmann. They have all in different ways helped to enrich our understanding of his early plays and to establish his position as a major dramatist. Moreover, I find myself (unlike Osborne) in general agreement with many of their final conclusions. Nonetheless it seems to me that in their concern to stress the visionary impetus of Hauptmann's imagination they have missed something of vital importance. They have all in their different ways tended to underestimate the extent to which his imagination in these realistic works is engaged with, and disciplined by, his commitment to the available methods of dramatic realism.[4] As a result they have also generally underestimated the extent to which the artistic character of these plays is shaped by the dramatist's peculiar attentiveness to the empirical world and by his scrupulous use of the techniques of observation and analysis. The desire of recent critics to reveal affinities between these and the later poetic plays has too often been allowed to override their sense of the unique imaginative identity of these early realist works. Inherent in their conception there is an ambiguity, an inconclusiveness even, which cannot in my view be played down and which separates them from the mythic vision of the later plays. These are works conceived in a realistic mode and we must respond to them on their own terms.

This is not simply an academic matter. It is not primarily a question of seeing these plays in their historical setting but of bringing to them a particular kind of attention. If we can see

them in the context of an evolving tradition of dramatic realism, we may become more fully aware both of the limitations of the mode in which the dramatist is working and of its unique imaginative possibilities. And this, as far as I can see, involves in the first place a readiness to accept that our knowledge of the dramatic characters and of what they experience is sometimes much more limited and precarious than critics have usually supposed. At important points we simply do not have information on which we can rely; repeatedly we are in a position where we have to adjudicate between different indications and try to bring them into agreement with one another. Sometimes we may think we have good reason for accepting some things on trust but at others we will have to depend on our own powers of inference or even supposition. These difficulties are inescapable; we are dependent for most of our information on the statements of characters who are portrayed as confused and divided within themselves and liable to completely misinterpret their own deepest motives. At times they may indeed be capable of making very astute judgements about themselves or their friends, but we can seldom know with absolute certainty when this is the case.

As far as I can see this fundamental critical difficulty has rarely been consistently faced by Hauptmann commentators. Too often they have allowed themselves to assume that the assertions of a character, even under severe pressure, can be taken as a sure guide not only to his own inward experience but also to the world in which the drama is set.[5] These works do not often allow us the indulgence of such easy conclusions. Here for much of the time the claims of one individual are in conflict not only with those of

another but also frequently with the evidence of his own behaviour or explicit aims. In this rigorously realistic form Hauptmann, it seems to me, is systematically exploiting dramatic possibilities first instinctively embraced by Hebbel in 'Maria Magdalena'. Hauptmann's awareness of the expressive powers of this spare, restricted mode is also charged by a pervading sense of the ambiguity of the spoken word.[6] He indeed seems to have taken the methods of a sceptical realism to their furthest limit. This is perhaps most obvious in his use of the stage-direction. His peculiar attentiveness to the physical reactions of a character can often be seen to imply a concern to question or qualify the words he has just spoken and thus to undermine the value of statements which we would otherwise probably accept without hesitation. In these plays the descriptions of a figure's facial or bodily movements acquire an unprecedented importance as an index of unrecognised or unadmitted feelings. In this respect he has made the stage-direction an integral part of the dramatic statement: it is the source of a series of indications which are frequently in conflict with one another and which we must somehow try to harmonise.

All that I have been saying may seem obvious enough. No Hauptmann critic has ever tried to deny that his early works are rooted in the vision of a specific social-historical situation, or that as a dramatist he was preoccupied with the revelation of hidden motives. Nonetheless it seems to me that they have generally underestimated the peculiar demands which his sceptical, probing realism makes upon us. Too often they have shown themselves to be impatient with the circumstantial and the social, and regarded it as a barrier to be surpassed or a surface to be penetrated in the

search for a symbolic or poetic structure beyond. This is most obviously apparent in the attempts to show a fundamental continuity between these and his later dramas which, as I have said, is such a prominent feature of recent Hauptmann criticism. To give just two glaring examples. In his highly concentrated and incisive study Emrich pointed to the dramatist's presentation of trance-like or ecstatic states of consciousness as a focus of imaginative concern in Hauptmann's work which has persisted essentially unchanged throughout its different phases. He did not, however, go on to consider that this preoccupation inevitably takes distinctive forms in these early works which are so overwhelmingly devoted to a minute, analytical inspection of motive, and that it subserves a highly specific dramatic purpose within this particular context.[7] Similarly, Schrimpf's attempt to show the working of a transcendent power of fate in the apparently random interactions of impersonal forces, seriously underestimates the wholeheartedness of the dramatist's commitment to the reality of these actual, contingent forces which he is so tenaciously engaged upon delineating.[8] It seems to me indeed to be one of the prime characteristics of the world Hauptmann evokes in these plays, that it lacks any unquestionable standards of value in terms of which we might be able to distinguish different planes of being or recognise with certainty the operation of higher agencies. Both these critics have failed to do justice to these works because they have tried to by-pass the impression of the sheer multiplicity and randomness of actual life which underlies and informs our awareness of the existence of the individual figures and which (in my view) is fundamental to their peculiar artistic power. We must face up to

this impression and to the peculiar demands it makes upon us. It is a warning against expecting conclusions which are too easy and too complete, certainties which are too comprehensive and totally unassailable.

II

Even in trying to interpret 'Das Friedensfest' and 'Einsame Menschen', which might seem the most open and accessible of Hauptmann's family dramas, it is by no means easy to grasp the nature of the processes determining the dramatic action. This fundamental difficulty may not be immediately apparent, for in these plays (in marked contrast to those that follow) our understanding is continuously guided by the reflections of articulate, intelligent figures who seem able to detach themselves sufficiently from the crisis in which they are caught up, to define its causes and implications. In their extensive discussions Robert and Wilhelm Scholz in 'Das Friedensfest', and Johannes Vockerat and Anna Mahr in 'Einsame Menschen' do indeed seem to show a remarkable ability to survey the developments which have brought their present situation into being, and at the same time to confront through persistent reflection and debate the nature of their own behaviour and that of the other figures involved. They themselves, moreover, are in no doubt that they are capable of grasping all the factors relevant to their situation and assessing their various implications. Even when the different partners to the discussion are in disagreement, they are both aware of what the source of this disagreement is and what exactly it involves.

The more we immerse ourselves in the study of these plays,

however, the less trustworthy these discussions appear. Certainly, to some extent they do clearly fulfil a valid expository function; we can often assume (and are in fact forced to assume) that they do accurately define certain circumstances, relationships or aspects of the characters' own experience and can furnish us with reliable information on these points. But when they are seen in the context of the developing action of the play, it becomes increasingly clear that they do not reveal fully and directly (as the characters themselves suppose) the real sources of the dramatic conflict. Seen in this context, it becomes more and more obvious that the characters' attempts to define their situation entail a failure, or even refusal, to face the real crisis in which they are involved.

One of the greatest difficulties in interpreting these plays is that of getting to grips with the ambiguity of the characters' views of their own situation. This must be a rather painstaking business. We can only come to a fuller understanding by trying to relate the characters' own assessments of themselves to other aspects of their behaviour; by comparing their own experience of predicament with the crisis which is more and more clearly revealed by the relentless progression of events. There can be no short-cuts here.

'Das Friedensfest', as almost all commentators have noted, comes to an end with an unresolved conflict of opinion. The two brothers Robert and Wilhelm Scholz put forward two opposing views of their respective positions and of the future which lies in store for them.[9] Robert, the older and more intellectual of the two, claims that his own view is based upon completely detached

observation and is in no way affected by his own personal prejudices and desires (pp.160ff.). He has studied the way things have developed in his home over the years and has come to the conclusion that the Scholz children are afflicted by an emotional deficiency which they can never overcome. They have been irreparably damaged, he claims, by a childhood without love or understanding and are now simply incapable of achieving genuine relationships (pp.160f.; cf. pp.120; 151). However much they may yearn for love, however much they may struggle to change themselves, they must always remain the victims of the fears and resentments they experienced in these early years and of the suspicion, violence and self-blame which are their inescapable consequences.

In Robert's view it is irresponsible of his brother to try to escape from his own nature by marrying Ida Buchner; all he can achieve by this is to draw this well-meaning, unsuspecting girl into the confusion and hostility which afflict the life of the Scholzes. His search for love must lead to a reliving of the disillusion and despair which engulfed the life of their father and helped to make their life a misery (pp.161f.).

Wilhelm, for his part, struggles to resist the engulfing pessimism of his brother's view. He passionately rejects Robert's claim that his understanding of the family situation is completely objective. What masks itself as objectivity, he contends, is a vision of life warped by cynicism - a cynicism which can be seen to stem from a deep, frustrated longing (p.163). Now Wilhelm does not try to minimise the disruptive effects of his childhood experience nor does he deny that he is still prey to wild, irrational forces in

himself which he cannot control. But he does insist that his love for Ida has aroused in him a sense of longing and a hope great enough for him to want to begin again. When he met Ida, he explains, he was a man racked by remorse and self-loathing and it was she who awakened in him the belief that he could free himself. Since that time, he has had already told Frau Buchner, his life has been one long unremitting struggle:

> "Stufe um Stufe mühsam gebaut habe ich mir - ach so mühsam! so mühsam!...Dies Haus lag hinter mir". (p.155)

His faith in a better future stems from the conviction that with her help he can gain control of the disorder in himself. To Robert's demand that he should accept himself as he is, he replies that he can change himself by effort (p.159). Robert, in his view, merely affects to doubt his ability to struggle because he cannot bear to see the inspiring force of Ida's goodness and trust:

> "Du weisst sehr gut, dass ich ehrlich kämpfen würde, doch ihrer schliesslich einigermassen würdig zu werden...Aber du willst es nicht!" (p.163)

In this final encounter both brothers are concerned to define what they see as the basic forces determining their lives. In Robert's view they are the objects of unconscious compulsions in themselves which they cannot influence, much less control, and which they must simply accept. Wilhelm, on the other hand, is convinced that with the sustaining help of Ida he can develop as a person; that by committing himself wholeheartedly to the ideal of love she shows him, he can overcome the conflict in himself and achieve an integrated, purposeful existence.

It is noticeable that in this last discussion the two brothers are re-stating the same convictions which they had held at the

beginning of the play. Neither has changed his position. Nothing that has taken place between them since their return has had a lasting impact upon their understanding of the family situation. This is a point of considerable importance. The fact that the family has found itself so unexpectedly re-united at this Christmas time, that they have all experienced for a time an intense feeling of mutual affection - this does not cause them in the end to modify their basic convictions. This is all the more noticeable since at the time both Robert and Wilhelm had accepted this experience of reconciliation as a kind of illumination, as the key to the apparently bewildering confusion of their life together. Here it is worth pausing to note just what happened on this occasion and what effects it had on the different members of the divided family.

What seems to disturb the normal attitudes of the Scholzes towards one another is the unexpected immediacy of the encounter between Wilhelm and his father. When the boy sees his father, he is suddenly overwhelmed by a violent longing for forgivenness and falls at his feet.[10] Dr. Scholz in turn is completely dismayed by this sight and moved spontaneously to forgive him (pp.134f.). Now all of a sudden all the members of the divided family find themselves caught up in an intense feeling of mutual affection and concern (pp.136f.). Meditating afterwards on this unpredicted eruption of family feeling both the brothers come to the conclusion that here at last a powerful yearning has been revealed which had been suppressed throughout the long years of antagonism and separation. Here at last they feel they have glimpsed the decisive truth about their life together. They are both seized by the conviction that

underlying all the bitterness and frustration they have been held together by a hidden drive to reconciliation. As Robert says:

> "Es ist doch jetzt in uns lebendig geworden, es war doch also in uns - warum ist es nicht schon früher hervorgebrochen? In Vater, in dir - und in mir wahrhaftigen Gott auch? (p.138)

This euphoric sense of family unity which has so suddenly come into being, is doomed, however, to almost immediate destruction. There can be no doubt that it is this which causes the brothers in the end to deny it any lasting significance. In just a matter of minutes Wilhelm and Robert find themselves again in an embittered argument. And this experience of hostility is so consuming, so much in keeping with the normal character of their relationship, that the peculiar sense of intimacy they had achieved is completely swept away. Now each can only accuse the other of having simulated feelings he could not possibly have felt (p.146).

Now it seems to me that this is a point of primary importance for an understanding of the action in 'Das Friedensfest'. We are unable simply to reject this experience of reconciliation as the characters themselves have done; we can see that it has a significance which they are totally unable to grasp. And this is decisive. Once we have seen their failure to understand this experience, we are forced to question their understanding of their situation as a whole and of the way things have developed in their home over the years.

The failure of the dramatic figures to understand the significance of this experience of reconciliation stems from the fact that they see it as a single isolated incident. To the spectator, however, it appears as part of a total emotional process

shaping the destiny of the Scholz family. In the first place this eruption of feeling must be seen in connection with the fact that all three male members of the family have been drawn to return home for Christmas. None of them, significantly, is given to reflecting on the strangeness of this apparent coincidence. In the course of the play they all give what seem to be very good reasons for staying away, for shunning all contact with one another.[11] But none of them seems to have any clear idea of the impulses which draw them together. When Wilhelm and Dr. Scholz become aware of each other's presence, they are both struck by a sense of fear and horror so strong that it amounts to panic. When they come face to face, however, the force and immediacy of their reactions show that they have subconsciously been awaiting just such a meeting. At the same time the speed with which this galvanising sense of affection sweeps through the whole family, also reveals the force of a shared, hidden longing (pp.135f.).

The experience of family unity appears therefore as the fulfilment of an urge which draws the Scholzes together largely in defiance of their conscious feelings. The very fact that they are re-united in the face of these great inhibitory pressures, is proof in itself that this is not just a fleeting outburst of sentimental emotion. The experience of reconciliation marks the break-through into consciousness of the forces which have held them together over the years, forces which are at work beneath the level of conditioned reaction and are able to determine behaviour despite it.

In the same way the events which lead to the break-down of this intense feeling of unity also acquire a significance for the spectator which the characters themselves are unable to grasp. The

fact that this feeling is so suddenly destroyed cannot in itself be seen as proof of its superficiality. In this too we are able to see the controlling power of impulses of which the characters themselves have no conscious knowledge. What brings the two brothers into conflict again is Robert's strangely hostile attitude to Ida. Wilhelm is infuriated by what he sees as his brother's deliberately offensive refusal to enter the festive spirit which she is trying so hard to create (p.143ff.). It is quite clear that Robert himself sees this refusal as stemming from a genuine hatred of all the conventional hypocrisy involved in the obligatory rituals of carol singing and present giving. Buteven if this protest is in itself quite sincere, he is shown to be acting under the constraint of a deeper, hidden motive. His strange behaviour now reveals the full depth of a conflict of feeling within him which has been disclosed in the opening act. Here in a moment of rare self-forgetfulness he seizes the purse which Ida has been making for Wilhelm's Christmas present and kisses it (p.123). This involuntary gesture, as the stage-direction is at pains to underline, betrays a confused infatuation with his brother's fiancée which he has refused to admit to himself. Certainly he shows no sign of being disconcerted by this unpremeditated action or of trying to relate it to his convinced view of himself as a completely self-contained, self-reliant individual who can find full satisfaction in an ironical withdrawal from life (pp.158f.). His subsequent rebuffal of Ida must be seen in the light of this unacknowledged contradiction in himself. It is noticeable that his hostility towards her first becomes apparent at the time when the presents are to be handed over, when his brother, that is, is about to receive the purse which

he secretly covets for himself. We can only conclude that the desire to hurt and belittle her, to destroy the obvious happiness she radiates, stems from a deep suppressed sense of envy which he refuses to recognise because it conflicts so sharply with his conscious understanding of his own nature.[12] When he suddenly finds himself before the whole family with Ida at the centre of general admiration, it would seem that he is unable to contain a rising sense of resentment. He is driven to injure her and in so doing somehow to diminish his brother. This is something of considerable importance and something which has too often been overlooked. What leads to the break-down of the reconciliation between the brothers is not any motiveless ill-will or hatred on Robert's part, but a profound, suppressed sense of sexual deprivation which neither he nor his brother can understand.

Now this sudden renewal of animosity certainly reveals the precariousness, the fragility of the experience of family unity, but it does not invalidate it, as both brothers believe. What it does show is that the drive to family reconciliation at work in the Scholzes cannot be isolated from their emotional experience as a whole. Although none of them is clearly aware of it, this drive is inseparably bound up with the operation of sexual energies which are also largely hidden from conscious scrutiny. That the two types of impulse are in fact intimately linked has already been suggested by the way in which Wilhelm has developed since he met Ida. After his love for her has reached a certain stage, he has clearly sensed that it can be fulfilled only if he can restore his relationships with his father and his brother. Now, conversely, it becomes clear that Robert's feeling for his brother has been undermined by an

unadmitted sense of sexual lack which forces him to see Wilhelm not as a friend but as a rival. The one emotional impulse is thwarted by the failure of the other; in his present situation, we must assume, Robert is simply incapable of achieving a relationship of lasting harmony with his brother.

The fact that the two brothers come again into conflict with one another does not therefore throw their earlier experience of brotherly relationship into doubt. Paradoxical as it may seem, it confirms what was made apparent in the reconciliation scene. It shows, albeit from a negative point of view, that the quest for relationship is the primary activating energy controlling the experience of the Scholz family; that this energy can be blocked and twisted into hatred but can never be neutralised.

The fact that the Scholzes are always in conflict with one another, does not show, as the brothers have come to believe, that they are all afflicted by some emotional deficiency. It points rather to an abnormal force of longing within them which has been consistently frustrated in their life together. None of them has any clear awareness of this creative drive underlying all their behaviour. They are all given to interpreting their behaviour in rationalist terms which can only distort their understanding of their life together and further intensify the violent tensions which threaten to destroy them. Both Robert's conviction that they are the warped creatures of a destructive environment and Wilhelm's belief that they can change themselves by determined effort, are shown to spring from a fundamental ignorance of the processes which shape their family's destiny. If Wilhelm is to achieve real happiness in his life with Ida it will not be primarily through any

conscious effort on his part but only because her love will be able to release and re-direct the creative energies which still lie largely dormant within him.

In 'Das Friedensfest' the dramatist, I have suggested, is primarily concerned with exploring the operation of unconscious forces which control the behaviour of the characters but which lie beyond the scope of their self-understanding. At the same time it is clear that the dramatist also sees these forces as operating within a highly specific, socially determined situation. His vision, in other words, embraces both those infra-personal impulses which are almost completely hidden in day-to-day life, and a particularised domestic situation which implies the character's involvement in concrete social-historical circumstances. This aspect of Hauptmann's conception, however, remains largely unrealised - to the detriment, as I believe, of the play as a whole. His preoccupation with the working of psychic forces is so engrossing that it almost completely eclipses his consciousness of the characters as social beings. Yet implicitly at least the characters are portrayed as individuals shaped by the pressures of a specific corporate situation and we are driven at times to speculate on the effects upon them of these social forces. The failure to show the interaction of these two types of influence is most disconcertingly apparent when we come to consider the crucial question of how Dr. Scholz comes to marry the sixteen year-old girl who proves so unsuited to him. We are not given enough clear information to be able to answer the crucial question: to what extent is this fateful decision affected by social pressures? Certainly the behaviour of Frau Scholz in the play does seem to

confirm Robert's suggestion that she married for money (p.152). She seems to lack the passionate intensity of her husband and her two sons, and her reactions do often seem to be governed by financial considerations (pp.116f.; 123; 153).[13] But there is no clear indication why Dr. Scholz, the intellectual and political idealist, should suddenly abandon his whole striving energetic existence and settle down with this girl so much his junior and social inferior. Once this step has been taken, however, events follow their inevitable course. After the first seemingly fulfilling years he is suddenly overtaken by a violent sense of disappointment and this experience marks the beginnings of the disruption in the family's existence. When his children are still small he withdraws completely from family life and takes up an isolated existence in a separate part of the house (p.131). He does not, however, find satisfaction in his isolation. Some time later, just as abruptly, he tries to re-form a relationship with his sons by taking charge of their education. Not surprisingly the two boys are taken aback by the unexpectedness and urgency of their father's concern and rebel violently against what they see as an unwarranted intrusion upon the freedom they have enjoyed (pp.131f.).[14] This rebellion in the end induces an equally violent reaction in Dr. Scholz and from this time on he withdraws even further into his own brooding existence. But even now he is not able to maintain his show of complete indifference. The conflict between father and son which seems to mark the final disintegration of the family unit reveals once again the force of a persisting longing for relationship which is completely hidden in his normal behaviour. Despite the fact that he has lived apart from his wife for years and, as far as we

know, has given no signs of affection, he is nonetheless seized by a sullen anger when he sees her unexpectedly happy and relaxed playing the piano with a musician friend of Wilhelm's (p.133). Even now he does not openly admit anger or jealousy, but is content merely to cast aspersions on his wife's relationship with the stranger. It is this which enrages Wilhelm and brings him into the confrontation with his father which spells disaster for the whole family.

This just brings us back again to our original question. The fact that we are given such a clear view of the emotional processes which lead to the break-down of the family's life together, forces us to ask again how it all began: how this marriage came into being in the first place. Is Dr. Scholz's decision to marry this girl who is so much younger in age and so unsuited to him emotionally, socially and intellectually, meant to show a failure of self-understanding on his part which has wider social implications? Does his decision, as a Marxist critic has implied, reflect an experience of political disenchantment? Is this, as Osborne has suggested, really a marriage of convenience?[15] We have no means of answering these questions and are thus in no position to consider the broader questions about the play's social relevance. We cannot, for instance, tell to what extent the analysis of family life here presented is meant to imply a critique of marriage as an institution or of accepted attitudes to sexual morality. This reveals a serious restriction in the dramatist's concern which is not apparent in any of his other domestic plays. His view of the dramatic figures here has an uncharacteristic clarity, and a simplicity which can be seen to stem from the fact that he has not attempted to penetrate the social aspects of their experience. His

sense of the irrational unitive energies at work in the Scholz family is so powerful that he is simply unable to see them simultaneously as subject to the modifying pressure of social determinants. In this respect 'Das Friedensfest' is unique. In no other play of this period is the conception of character so little informed and enriched by a concrete awareness of a determining social situation. For this reason alone it seems to me to be impossible to base conclusions about Hauptmann's early work as a whole on the study of this one play. The marked tendency to isolate the dramatic world from the actual world of social-historical processes which in different ways has excited the interest of Emrich, Guthke and Alexander, is already overcome in 'Einsame Menschen'.[16]

In comparison with 'Das Friedensfest' 'Einsame Menschen' is a much more richly and explicitly social play. Yet it is so, I believe, in a way which is more ambiguous and challenging than might at first seem to be the case. Certainly it is a distinctive feature of this work that all the characters are aware of a society in process of change and try to define the nature of their relations to it. What is more, they all regard Johannes Vockerat, the central figure, as the victim of the great tensions pervading the life of society as a whole, and assume that it is only by coming to terms with his experience of a changing world that he can overcome the disorder in himself. Whether they see the rejection of traditional religious and moral certainties as a symptom of society's rapid disintegration or as a sign of its imminent renewal, they all see Vockerat's tortured, anguished indecision as arising out of his failure to face up to a situation in which the individual is confronted with opposing views and must sooner or later make a final

commitment. His uncertainty, as they see it and as Johannes sees it himself, is basically the same as that of other young men of his generation who have been driven by the force of new ideas to question the values and standards in which they have been brought up.[17]

It would seem then that all the characters in the play share some fundamental assumptions about the crisis in the life of Johannes, even though they interpret this crisis in completely different ways. At the same time, however, we cannot help noticing that as the action develops, the way he sees his situation comes more and more into conflict with the way the other figures see it. It is not that they ever question the basic connection between his predicament and the crisis in collective life, but they do tend increasingly to see in his suffering an element which, if not alien to social experience, does not seem to stem directly or inescapably from it. It is this which is the point of serious disagreement. Johannes violently rejects this suggestion of something unique and, as it were, private in his experience, something rooted in a purely personal weakness on his part. Such criticism he can only regard as typical of the misunderstanding to which someone like himself who strives beyond accepted modes of thought and attitude, must be exposed. The fact that those closest to him see things in this way only serves to confirm his feeling of victimisation; right till the end he regards their failure to see things with his eyes as proof of the prejudice and suspicion which the progressive man must suffer in a confused, recalcitrant society.

In the first two acts of the play the conflicting estimates of Johannes' position seem clear-cut and completely predictable. On

the one hand, his mother sees his restlessness and anxiety as arising out of the fact that he has surrendered his mind to the solicitations of a treacherous, godless age. This, she insists, has brought him no happiness, for there is within him a yearning for truth which can never be stilled until he has freed himself from the illusion that man can live without God (pp.182f.; 207f.). He can only regain his peace of mind in her view by returning to the timeless truths of Christianity which the modern world in its vain dream of progress is striving to overthrow.

Both Braun and Anna Mahr, members of the younger generation, see Johannes' conflict in a quite different way. In their view it is rooted in a split within him between intellectual energy, on the one hand, and emotional weakness on the other. Although he is driven to reject inherited ways of thought, he is still bound by a dependence upon his home and parents which prevents him from gaining complete freedom of spirit (pp.179f.; 195; 202f.; 205ff.). Despite the fact that he has freed himself as a thinker from a false respect for tradition, as a man he is still bound by a quest for parental affection and approval which must bring him into conflict with himself. Johannes himself recognises this discrepancy in his make-up. His uneasy willingness to have his son baptised shows how deeply he suffers from the inconsistencies in his own attitude; at the same time it shows that he has no idea how they might be resolved (pp.175f.). This is in fact typical of his position. He is not working towards any envisaged solution but is content merely to hold on, avoiding open conflict, on the one hand, and a too serious violation of his beliefs, on the other. His difficulty lies in the fact that his lofty evolutionist ethic leaves

no room for the type of attachment to individuals which governs his day-to-day life. His ideal is in fact as impersonal as Loth's; yet he is clearly unable to conceive of an existence outside the structure of family relationships which has enclosed his life since birth.

The great sense of release which Anna's presence brings to Johannes, stems from the fact that she really understands, and indeed shares in, his experience of dilemma. From the beginning she shows a clear and sympathetic grasp of his intellectual ambitions and this is something which is of great value to him (pp.205f.). But perhaps even more important is the fact that Anna comes to sense the depth of the affection which holds together the different individuals in this household. She comes to see these affections not simply as a binding, inhibiting force but also as something nourishing and potentially creative of which she herself has been deprived.[18] She alone of all his friends can feel the power which lies in such attachments. She alone can <u>feel</u> his plight from the inside.

From the beginning it is clear that a very special bond exists between Johannes and Anna. He, for his part, acknowledges the peculiar closeness and warmth of this attachment but insists that it is based on profound feelings of sympathy and mutual respect which have no sexual root (pp.229f.). His feelings for her do not clash with his love for his wife Käthe nor do they bring him into conflict with his parents who have adopted her as their own child and who in any case place such a high value on marital fidelity. On the contrary, he claims that this friendship has had the effect of integrating and enriching all his emotions, of making him feel

fully at one with himself (p.238).

It is above all this awareness of the heightening, renewing power of his relationship with Anna which assures him of its essentially spiritual character. At the same time, however, he does recognise that such an association must meet with suspicion in a society which has been conditioned to see any contact between a man and a woman in sexual terms. He accepts that it is impossible for an outsider to grasp the power of the shared idealism which binds them, yet he insists nonetheless that he will not yield to such prejudice (pp.229f.). Suspect as such relations must be at this stage in man's moral development, they will one day, he believes, be regarded as both completely normal and desirable (pp.238f.). Since Johannes is thus convinced both of the purity of his feelings for Anna and of the inevitable hostility of an indignant world, he can resist every protest or accusation. Armed as he is with these twin convictions, he can reject every criticism out of hand as the expression of the inevitable anger of a fearful, reactionary society (pp.229f.; 239; 247ff.).

The criticism of Johannes' association with Anna grows steadily in the course of the play. In the early stages of the action all the characters seem to share his view that the effects of the girl's presence in the Vockerat household are completely beneficial. Frau Vockerat and Käthe in particular comment on the good she is doing Johannes and treat her with an affection and respect which seem completely genuine (pp.197f.; 218ff.). Nor have we any grounds for believing that they are deceived in their estimate of Anna. There is no sign anywhere, as far as I can see, of a deviousness which has escaped their notice, or, perhaps even more important, that she

herself is deceived about the character of her own feelings.

Yet in the face of all this accumulated evidence there is a suggestion already in the opening acts that all is not what it seems in the Vockerat household. This suggestion is both indirect and inexplicit, but it is none the less unmistakable and extremely disconcerting in its implications. It arises out of the reactions of Käthe, Vockerat's wife. This apparently superficial and unsuspecting creature, so limited in her experience of life and human relationships, appears more and more clearly as a being who is recurrently overcome by an instinctive foreboding of disaster which is quite dissociated from her conscious thought. This split in her reactions is already evident in the first act. On the first occasion that Johannes speaks to her about Anna, her replies are quite predictable and in no way abnormal. When he expresses his admiration for the girl and suggests that she should be asked to stay with them, she agrees wearily but without apparent misgivings (p.193). But as soon as Johannes leaves her she is seized by a sudden weakness:

> "In Käthe ist etwas vorgegangen. Sobald Johannes fort ist, wird sie gleichsam welk und muss, während sie sich bemüht, auf die Veranda zu kommen, Stützpunkte mit den Händen suchen...Schliesslich kann sie nicht weiter und ist genötigt, sich zu setzen. Sie hält nun die Augen starr vor sich hin gerichtet und bewegt lautlos die Lippen." (p.193)

At this point we have no means of knowing just what it is that causes this violent reaction. But the suddenness and force of the feeling which overtakes her, would seem to point to something more than simple exhaustion. In any case it soon becomes clear that this is not just a passing attack. Shortly afterwards the sight of

Johannes and Anna together happy and relaxed has a similarly shattering effect upon her. This time it is clear that it is the sight of their happiness which is the source of her peculiar sense of dread (p.198).

The force of this physical reaction is all the more striking as Käthe has just been speaking to Frau Vockerat about Anna's presence in her home and has shown no sign of real agitation. Between the mildness and ease of her words and this extreme nervous response there seems no obvious connection. Almost immediately afterwards the same discrepancy becomes apparent again. When Käthe approaches Johannes obviously looking for tenderness and reassurance, it is noticeable that she expresses only vague feelings of uncertainty and disquiet which seem to arise out of a simple sense of depression (pp.210ff.). Johannes certainly sees things this way and it is hard to see what other conclusion he could draw. Her protestations of inadequacy seem to stem more from a desire to be contradicted than from an attempt to grapple with a rising feeling of despair. She seems, moreover, completely reassured by Johannes' warm and spontaneous declarations of love and he leaves her to go off with Anna quite untroubled. But although at one level she does seem reassured, the thought of his being with Anna again releases in her some inarticulate feeling of hopelessness:

> "Frau Käthe sieht ihm starr nach, wie jemand, der eine schöne Erscheinung in nichts zerfliessen sieht. Ihre Augen füllen sich mit Tränen." (p.213)

This scene is of very great importance. This is the only time that Käthe really tries to explain herself to Johannes. We have no reason to doubt the sincerity of her attempt to communicate her feelings or to suppose she is consciously holding something

back. Yet what she actually says is so inconclusive and even banal that it gives no sign of the instinctive terror revealed in her bodily reactions. Nor does she give the impression of someone groping for the words to express sensations which lie beyond the range of her common experience. It would seem rather as if her intuition of break-down were simply not present to her conscious intelligence. She appears indeed to exist on two quite separate planes of awareness. On one level the structures of her normal experience seem to remain largely intact; although under stress, she goes on carrying out her household duties as if nothing decisive had happened. Despite her awareness that she and Johannes are not as close as they once were, she continues to love him and (what is most important) to believe in his complete faithfulness to her (p.213). At the same time she goes on treating Anna with real affection and regarding her other relationships very much as before. Yet simultaneously in some area of her mind she is aware of some irreparable defeat. This awareness, as I have suggested, seems to be purely instinctive and the force of her nervous reactions shows that it has cut at the very roots of her affective experience. So profound is this sense of loss that we must assume that it is sexual in origin: that it arises out of a subliminal recognition that she has been displaced from the centre of her husband's affection. As far as we can judge, however, this destructive certainty remains locked within her, out of reach of the probings of her rational mind. Apart from these few moments of naked panic when the normal operations of her consciousness are disturbed, it is reflected only in the progressive deterioration of her health.[19]

In the first two acts of the play this intuition of break-down

remains completely isolated. Nothing in what she or any of the other characters says lends it any emphasis, much less support. However, as the action develops, it comes more and more into the centre of attention. It is Käthe's persisting depression which forces Frau Vockerat to face up to the possibility that Johannes has been unfaithful and to try to compel him to put an end to his association with Anna (pp.225f.). The failure of this attempt leads in turn to Braun's effort to convince Johannes that he cannot go on as he is and that in the interests of family unity he must make a break with the girl (pp.228f.). The very appearance of Käthe, as he says later to Anna, is enough to prove that a real crisis exists in the Vockerat household (p.242). Shortly afterwards when Herr Vockerat arrives, he too is disturbed by Käthe's appearance and is thus all too ready to accept his wife's report of Johannes' unfaithfulness (pp.245f.). Thus although Käthe's suffering remains wordless and never leads to any expression of reproach or self-pity, it comes to be recognised more and more clearly by the other figures and to influence their attitudes to the situation in the Vockerat household.

Nonetheless right until the final stages of the action Käthe's intuition cannot be seen as giving us any certain knowledge about the relationship between Johannes and Anna. Certainly it arouses suspicion in the other figures, but this is based on the assumption that she knows something they do not, and not on anything they have seen themselves. Her feeling conflicts both with the sincere conviction of the two individuals involved and the impression they make on those around them. It is not until the last two meetings between Johannes and Anna in the fourth and fifth acts that we have

any means of putting it to the test. Here Anna, responding to the increasingly tense atmosphere in the Vockerat household, forces Johannes to discuss openly the nature of their feelings for one another and to consider the peculiar responsibilities which these feelings entail.

The lengthy discussion between the two friends in Act IV is provoked by Anna's announcement that she is going to leave. Johannes cannot see any necessity for such a decisive step and does his best to dissuade her. Anna claims simply that in the circumstances she has no choice but to go: a relationship like theirs must inevitably arouse misunderstanding and as a result cause suffering, and they cannot simply ignore this (238f.). When pressed by Johannes, however, she goes further. Even if others could grasp the idealistic character of their relationship, she is not sure that she herself could live up to it in practice (p.240). Now here she is surely conceding more than she openly allows. To be conscious of a possible danger in their relationship is to confess tacitly that she has in a sense already experienced it. But she does not admit as much. She veils her confession in such a way as to leave the framework of their idealistic faith intact. Her first concern in this, as soon becomes clear, is the welfare of Johannes (pp.252f.). Her aim is above all to help him retain the faith necessary to overcome the hardship of parting. This is shown at the actual moment of parting when she reminds Johannes that in separating they are acting freely and in accordance with their highest ideals (pp.252f.). Here, however, it is apparent that she is now seeing their idealism in quite a different way. The obligation which in her view now faces them is that of freeing themselves voluntarily

from a relationship which compromises their ideal, which is, in other words, tainted by sensuality. By arguing like this she is rejecting (if indirectly) the view of their relationship which they had claimed to hold and to which Johannes himself still obstinately clings. The gulf which has opened between them is revealed in his unsuspecting request that he be allowed a farewell 'brotherly' kiss. By allowing herself to yield to his desire Anna in effect gives up her attempt to protect him from a truth which (as she senses) he could not bear:

> "Er umschlingt sie, und beider Lippen finden sich in einem einzigen langen inbrünstigen Kusse, dann reisst Anna sich los und verschwindet." (p.254)

We cannot know exactly what happens to Johannes after Anna leaves. But we must assume that this one moment of passion has driven him into a self-confrontation which he can no longer escape. We must further suppose that it is the shock of this self-recognition, coinciding as it does with Anna's final departure, which destroys him. Within the space of a few seconds he has been faced by the realisation that he loves her and that he must lose her; that he has betrayed himself and his family and cannot go back to it as the man he was. After Anna's departure he is described in the stage-direction as standing dazed and bewildered, and this most probably reflects the dawning recognition of an inescapable contradiction. He does not seem even to consider the possibility of following her, but the thought of remaining without her must appear equally unbearable to him. The sound of Anna's train seems to focus a sense of utter hopelessness; in any case it has the effect of releasing a panic within him from which he never recovers (p.255).

The inner collapse of Johannes Vockerat, we must conclude, is

brought about by an emotional conflict in himself which he is unable really to recognise. This conflict, as I see it, has two distinguishable elements or facets. The recognition of his love for Anna has such a disintegrating impact upon him not just because it shows him to be a traitor to his own ideals, but also because it clashes with his consciousness of his unbreakable involvement with his family. It reveals an irresistible yearning within him which not only contradicts his cherished image of himself but which also clashes with the ties of affection which he knows to be fundamental to his existence. Now this complex emotional crisis is closely bound up with the experience of social alienation which Johannes sees as the source of his troubles, but it is not simply identical with it. In fact, although Johannes must to some extent be seen as the victim of an uncomprehending world, the significance of this experience of estrangement is called in question by the revelation of the infatuation he has struggled to deny. Once this has been revealed, we must suspect that he has been using this experience as a means of resisting an intolerable truth. He has to convince himself of his forsakenness in a hostile society in order to justify his need of Anna's companionship and help; he has to be able to see this relationship as a necessary refuge if he is to keep himself free of doubt. His concern to invoke the plight of the lonely progressive spirit thus seems essentially ambiguous. It does define a genuine social experience and is therefore part of a valid analysis of a social-historical situation; but it also appears as symptomatic of the hero's attempt to disguise from himself a truth which he cannot face.

But even if none of the dramatic figures can fully understand

it, the whole process of Vockerat's self-division and break-down reveals his involvement in the life of a particular society. The character of his feelings for the two women and in particular his inability to know and confront these feelings, show the force of pressures upon him which inhibit his understanding of himself. His failure to come to terms with his situation is shown to be closely linked to the fact that he sees his life as the repository of certain fundamental moral and social values which are for him beyond all doubt. His sense of his own identity, in other words, is shaped by the assumption of his total conformity to principles and aims which he not only cannot question but which he simply cannot see himself contravening. For him some things, it would seem, are literally unthinkable. To accept himself as a moral being he is compelled to see himself as totally committed to his responsibility as a husband which, as we have already noted, coincides in practice with his need to retain the approval and affection of his parents. He is indeed a man haunted by an unexamined terror of sexual aberration - a terror no doubt implanted by his strictly religious upbringing and now confirmed by a secular idealism just as relentless in its demands.

Even this secular idealism which he sees as a measure of his spiritual emancipation, is responsive to the force of that drive to please his parents which underlies his whole emotional experience. And what is more, this drive is itself seen as subject to environmental pressures. It is clear that Johannes has been taught to love his parents as a duty (pp.227f.; 249). He has been taught both to accept their goodness and the authority which such goodness implies, and been brought to believe that the only valid response to this must

be a life of obedient gratitude. Even when he comes to reject the doctrinal basis on which this teaching claims to be founded, its hold over his emotions remains unbroken.

There can be no doubt about the sense of filial obligation imposed on Johannes by his early religious and moral education. And yet if we describe it in these terms we can only wonder how much such induced attitudes really affect the feelings of the Vockerats for one another. There is a warmth about them, a capacity to give and accept affection, which is quite unusual and which cannot be explained solely in terms of induced reactions. When Frau Vockerat struggles to express her experience of motherhood or when she describes the reactions of her husband at the birth of their son and of their son's son, we have a glimpse of the intensity of the emotions which have informed the day-to-day life of the family over the years (pp.182f.; 196; 244f.). Certainly in their understanding of their parenthood they have been guided by the norms derived from a conventional and very restricted moral outlook, but their relations with one another never appear as totally determined by the pressures of a socially imposed role. This is perhaps most significantly revealed at the climax of the action when Vockerat is summoned by his wife to assert his authority as head of the family. Here there is a striking discrepancy between the conventional function he is required to fulfil and the tense, anguished experience of the man himself. He arrives at his son's house quite unsuspecting and as excited as a child at the thought of being with his family again. His delight at seeing Käthe again is overwhelming:

> "Vockerat stürzt wie ein Wirbelwind hinter seinem Ofen hervor, lachend und weinend zugleich...Er umarmt und küsst Käthe wiederholt." (p.245)

When he meets his wife after this (by no means lengthy) separation which has been the longest of their life, he is described in the stage-direction as being 'beside himself'. When they fly speechless into each other's arms, Käthe is so overcome by emotion she has to leave the room (p.245).

To a man with this experience of life adultery with its threat to the family unit must appear not only as evil in a doctrinal or moral sense but as emotionally appalling and indeed incomprehensible. Although in his attempts to remonstrate with Johannes he withdraws behind a protective wall of theological argument where he clearly knows himself to be unanswerable, this cannot hide the sense of real perplexity and concern which underlies the unyielding harshness of his demands. His son, moreover, feels this and is noticeably moved by it (248f.). The dislocating effect of this confrontation on Johannes does not stem primarily from the fact that it shows up the ideological gulf which exists between them, important as this clearly is; it arises rather out of the recognition of the genuineness of the love which struggles to communicate itself to him and which he still yearns for. His final surrender to his father's plea marks his open acknowledgement of his dependence on this love; it is part of himself and insuperable. To try to retain his hold on Anna is to forfeit this love. But without her, as he seems to realise in despair a few minutes later, even this love cannot save him.

III

The prolonged discussions which claim so much of our attention in 'Das Friedensfest' and 'Einsame Menschen', do not really lay bare the decisive emotional crisis which takes place almost completely out

of sight. In the context of the evolving action the hero's attempt to come to terms with his situation by means of concerted reflection and debate appears more and more dubious. It does, it is true, reveal his power to grasp some developments or relationships with increasing clarity, but in so doing it also shows his almost complete inability to understand the determining pressure of impulses which lie beyond the reach of conscious knowledge. Indirectly, in other words, it serves to define the narrow limitations of his self-understanding, to show the dissociation of his rational mind from the subliminal energies which control his behaviour. It is noticeable that in the domestic tragedies written after 1890 there is very little discussion of the kind which is so prominent in these earlier plays. It is as if after 'Einsame Menschen' Hauptmann had been gripped by the sense of a form still more austere and restricted - a form in which the mute, submerged suffering of a Käthe would be the vitalising focus of dramatic concern. The technical difficulties involved in this undertaking would seem to be quite overwhelming. In works like 'Fuhrmann Henschel', Michael Kramer', 'Rose Bernd', 'Gabriel Schillings Flucht' and 'Die Ratten' he is intent on realising in dramatic terms an inner development which is never fully accessible to the conscious mind of the protagonist, which he cannot even begin to communicate, and which at the same time is not clearly reflected in his behaviour or (as far as we can see) in his experience of events in the everyday world. It is a measure of the dramatist's rare success that he has managed to make this central experience in almost every case completely convincing to the imagination without at the same time making it fully explicable in intellectual terms. The power

simultaneously to possess the imagination and to trouble the rational mind is in my view the most distinctive characteristic of these works. They force us to substantiate retrospectively the impression of truth they succeed in making directly upon us; they challenge us to an understanding which we instinctively feel to be possible but which we have not yet achieved.

In 'Fuhrmann Henschel', 'Rose Bernd' and 'Die Ratten' the difficulties which confront the protagonist can be seen to stem in part from his own prior attempts to overcome a severe sense of dislocation. Early in the action of all these plays the hero makes a decisive effort to restore order to his existence. In the event, however, this serves only to expose him to a greater crisis which he has not been able to foresee. In 'Fuhrmann Henschel' the hero's decision to marry Hanne Schäl after the death of his first wife, changes the course of his whole life. He himself seems to sense the crucial nature of this decision and keeps trying to avoid making a final commitment. Although he has become increasingly convinced that re-marriage is the only way out of his worsening business difficulties, something in him rebels against taking the decisive step. It is soon made clear in his talk with Siebenhaar that this deep-seated sense of reluctance is focussed in Henschel's awareness of a promise he gave his first wife that, even if she were to die, he would not marry Hanne (pp.925ff.). But now the practical problems facing him have become so acute that he feels he can simply no longer go on alone (p.927).

The rational, well-meaning Siebenhaar tries to help dispel Henschel's doubts. He seeks to persuade the drayman that he should not feel bound by a promise given only to reassure a sick and

hysterical woman and to confirm the latter's half-accepted belief that if he can overcome the crisis in his business life, he will be able to free himself from the shock of bereavement and begin again. Now the fact that Henschel should entertain such a belief at all, would seem to indicate some change in him. For he appears in these early parts of the play as a man who is sought after for help and advice precisely because he is always aware of the individual and his problem and never allows his attitude to be determined by purely material considerations. There is a simplicity and generosity about him which attracts people and especially people in need.[20] Here, however, his feelings towards Hanne seem completely lacking in warmth and sensitivity - in fact they seem to have little in common with his feelings towards her when his wife was alive (883ff.). Then he had seen her very much as an individual in her own right with her own particular needs and feelings. Now he seems aware only of her exploitable qualities of energy and resource and able to see her only as a means to an end - an aid in his fight against economic disaster. His relationship with her, as he speaks of it here, has no emotional significance for him at all; he sees it as a purely practical arrangement forced on him by circumstances. Even when he does reveal that he is aware of Hanne's sensual nature, he speaks as if this were of relevance only to her past life which they have in fact been discussing at this point (p.927).

This revelation, however, just because it is so casual and so soon dismissed from his thoughts, should give us pause. When seen in connection with this change in his attitude to the girl, it suggests that Henschel's feelings are perhaps more complex than he is willing to concede. That this is indeed so is further suggested

by the way in which his decision to marry Hanne is actually reached. His prolonged discussion with Siebenhaar takes place just after he has returned from visiting his wife's grave. At this point he still seems painfully undecided about what he should do. In the course of the conversation it becomes clear that he went to the grave-side not to honour her memory or even to relive past experiences, but to open himself to her spirit which he feels to be still somehow present and able to communicate itself to him (p.929). He is obviously very disturbed by the awareness of his desire to marry Hanne which conflicts with the vow he has made his dead wife and he is prepared (or believes himself to be) to renounce this desire if he feels it is her will. At the same time he is clearly hoping for a sign that she has released him from his vow and approved of his plan to marry again.

Now what is most significant about this inner dialogue is the fact that Henschel unquestioningly accepts the priority of his relationship with his dead wife, which he feels still has an unconditional claim upon him. He can contemplate marriage with Hanne only if he is convinced that it is compatible with this claim - only if, in other words, he is sure that his wife has sanctioned it. He does not gain such assurance, however, and he returns home still deeply perplexed. His final decision to marry Hanne - and this we must note carefully - is not the result of any greater certainty in himself but of a sudden change in his situation: Hanne, rightly sensing the conflict within him, takes matters into her own hands by threatening to leave (919ff.). The shock of this ultimatum is enough to tip the scales. Henschel agrees to marry her, but he does so without having come to terms with the deep sense of

reluctance in himself. The fear of losing her is enough to drive his doubt underground, but it does not heal the conflict of feeling which tortures him.

Seen from this point of view Henschel's strangely altered attitude to Hanne appears as symptomatic of a deep inner confusion. His attempt to devalue this association, to see it solely as a practical arrangement, reveals an unconscious need to regard his relationships with the two women as different in kind and therefore as capable of existing side by side without friction. Henschel appears here as a man divided against himself, unable to see the force of his desire for Hanne because of a profound, constraining sense of loyalty to his first wife. The fact that he has been so successful in screening his real feelings from his conscious mind, is a measure of the ominous power of this irrational sense of obligation.

From the beginning, Henschel's relationship with Hanne is under such severe pressure that it is impossible to see how it could succeed. The conflict within him is such that he cannot see her as she is or understand the nature of his abnormal dependence upon her. For Henschel everything is at stake in this relationship. If he is to hold at bay the latent consciousness of guilt which threatens to engulf him, this marriage must succeed: it must be the means of restoring order and security to his social existence and of granting him the sexual fulfilment which his hidden passion for her demands. Only if it were to succeed fully in these different ways, could it allow him to feel justified in what he has done and thus enable him to accept himself again as a moral being. Hanne, however, as far as we can judge, is not equal to such a crisis. She gives no sign

whatever of having the ability either to see or to respond to the great anguish which afflicts Henschel.

We are not shown the gradual deterioration of Henschel's relationship with Hanne. In Act III which takes place just a few months after the marriage, it is shown to be under severe strain and in the following act we see its sudden and irrevocable collapse.

Already in the earlier act it is clear that Henschel has not been able to find in his life with Hanne the re-assurance he has been seeking. In the first place despite her ruthless re-organisation of his affairs his economic position seems only to get worse and worse (p.945; cf. p.925). But probably of even greater importance is the fact that his daughter Gustel has died within weeks of his re-marriage (pp.947ff.). It is not hard to see what this must have meant for Henschel. There is no doubt that he loved this child as the living reminder of his dead wife, the issue of a love which still exists and still makes inescapable demands upon him. Although his life still takes much the same course, it is soon made clear that this death, coming as it does so soon after his re-marriage, has acquired a peculiarly ominous significance for him - a significance which he is already fighting to deny.

His situation is made worse by Hanne's total lack of sympathy. She regards his growing loss of confidence and vitality with nothing but exasperation and scorn. This growing impatience is most clearly revealed when Henschel brings her illegitimate daughter Bertha to live with them. This has a special importance for him. In adopting the child he is not seeking simply to fill the gap left by the death of his own daughter; he is also trying to awaken a warmth in Hanne which he feels she must possess but which remains hidden behind her harsh exterior (pp.953ff.). He is hoping that the child

will provide a real centre for their life together and in so doing make possible an intimacy between them which has been completely lacking. Hanne, however, receives this gesture with a suspicion and a resentment which take Henschel completely by surprise. The force of his disappointment suggests that he feels not only rebuffed and misjudged, but that he suddenly sees himself confronted by a brutal egotism with which he is simply unable to cope.

The effects of this deepening experience of estrangement are revealed in the sudden total break-down of Henschel in the following act. As has been said, we are given no clear view of the processes leading up to this collapse; all that is presented on stage is the shock which finally precipitates it, the one blow sufficient to clinch a realisation lurking just beneath the surface of consciousness. It is significant that this climactic development takes place in the tap-room of the inn, the place where for years Henschel has met his acquaintances in close and easy friendship. On this occasion, however, he finds himself surrounded not by affection but by mounting suspicion and ill-will. It is no accident that it is Walther, the brother of Henschel's dead wife, who becomes the spokesman for the hostile community and faces him with the rumours which have been circulating in the small town. In the first place Walther claims that by falling under Hanne's influence he has lost all the respect and sympathy he had once enjoyed. He has allowed unjust and inconsiderate things to be done in his name which he would never have tolerated before. And as if this weren't enough, he has stood by and allowed her to deceive him (p.977). The way in which Walther pronounces this indictment suggests that he is sure Henschel already knows of Hanne's infidelity and has simply

refused to face up to it. Henschel, however, is completely taken aback by this accusation and flies into a wild uncontrollable rage (p.979). In the atmosphere of rising tension Walther voices a further and more terrible suspicion which has arisen out of the spectacle of Henschel's enslavement: that he and Hanne have conspired to get rid of his first wife and, when this was done, of his daughter Gustchen. This much more serious charge makes no apparent impression on Henschel. He seems completely preoccupied with the question of Hanne's faithfulness. It is only when she appears and makes no attempt to defend herself against this smaller and quite specific charge, that he completely breaks down:

> "Dass ich...mei Weib...dass wir mitnander...dass unser Gustel..'s is gutt! 's is gutt! Er lässt Walthers Hand los und lässt röchelnd den Kopf auf den Tisch sinken." (p.983)

In some way which is not apparent, the realisation of Hanne's deception opens the way to some great and terrible certainty. How this comes about and what kind of certainty this is which possesses him, we cannot know. But whatever its character, it is completely overwhelming; after this he appears as a broken man musing distractedly on the way his life has developed, in order the better to understand the logic of his own damnation.

We are never in a position to say with final certainty what has actually happened to Henschel. His reflections in the final act of the play are too disjointed and confused to provide a coherent account of what he has gone through; nonetheless his obsessive preoccupation with certain specific aspects of his experience and his tendency to associate certain events or ideas and to disregard others, do provide us with some significant indications which we must

try to relate to what we actually know of the conflict within him.

In the first place, as we have already noted, it would seem to be the recognition of Hanne's unfaithfulness which lends irresistible force to Walther's more serious charge that he had already betrayed his wife during her life-time and wanted her out of the way. There can be no doubt that the destructive effect of this accusation stems from the fact that it reiterates the indictment which his wife herself had made during her illness. Now, after the collapse of his relationship with Hanne, he has no defence against the disintegrating consciousness of guilt which takes possession of him. Everywhere he goes he feels the spirit of his first wife to be present condemning him (p.995; cf. p.989).

But although he is convinced of his guilt, Henschel does not accept Walther's charge in the literal sense in which the latter had intended it. In fact, he does not even seem sure if he did desire Hanne while his wife was still alive. His thinking is controlled rather by the consciousness of an inscrutable pattern in which his guilt plays a crucial, but essentially indefinable, part. He is convinced that all the blows he has suffered - the deaths of his wife and child, of his dog and horses, his business failures and his other misfortunes - that all of these are closely and inescapably connected with a fundamental betrayal of trust on his part (pp.993 ff.). All the apparently random factors in his situation, he feels, are somehow bound up with this irreversible failure in himself. But he is far from certain about the specific nature of his involvement. He seems to think at one point that it is his initial act of treachery which has set the whole process in motion, at another that his guilt is itself a simple consequence of a pre-

existent condition of estrangement for which he cannot be held responsible.[21] But although he is unsure about how he has become involved, he is totally persuaded that his life has somehow fallen under the control of hostile supernatural powers. Whether it is they who are responsible for his guilt, or whether they punish him for his own prior failure, he does not know; but he feels himself completely helpless before their merciless power.

It is probable that Henschel's primitive, mythic imagination is here struggling to come to terms with a submerged sense of inner disruption. His feeling of an absolute subjection to higher agencies probably reflects an experience of total powerlessness before the unknown directing energies within his own self. If this is so then his experience of ultimate rejection might be seen as reflecting a subliminal feeling of self-violation, of a contradiction at the heart of his affective life. Certainly, the consciousness of failure precipitated by his attachment to Hanne would seem to point to a sense of relationship with his first wife which is impelled by a spiritual yearning for complete self-surrender. It is probably this sense that underlies his awareness of some bond with her which transcends death itself. His attraction to Hanne, on the other hand, would seem to be governed by an animal acknowledgement of sexual strength which conflicts not only with his conscious view of himself but also with his profound, intuitive sense of attachment to his first wife which till now had completely controlled his emotional experience.

At first sight the experience of the heroine in 'Rose Bernd' has little in common with that of the protagonist in 'Einsame

Menschen' and 'Fuhrmann Henschel'. Whereas these figures are driven by deep-seated, hidden needs into situations which finally engulf them, Rose appears as a girl who is able to see clearly the dangers which await her and to take the necessary steps to overcome them. The difficulties which do eventually beset her, do not stem from any unrecognised conflict in her own nature but from changes in her external circumstances over which she has no control.

In the opening act of the play Rose resolutely puts an end to her affair with Flamm. This causes her great pain, because this relationship, as she readily admits, is the source of an intense happiness which she knows she will never experience again (pp.189f.; cf. p.224). She is deliberately sacrificing all hope of sexual fulfilment in order to undertake what she sees as an inescapable obligation. She tries to explain to the exasperated Flamm that she is marrying August Keil not because she loves him, but because this is the only way that she can make sure her father will enjoy a measure of security and happiness in his old age (p.190). Her feelings for her father are clearly informed by a deep, commanding compassion. She sees him as a man who has been progressively deprived of everything which gave meaning to his life - his wife, his work, his home, his health - and who is now faced by the threat of total hopelessness. By marrying Keil she is offering him a home, a new order for his life and a new confidence in the future. At the same time it is clear that Rose also feels a genuine sympathy for her fiancé whom she also sees as a man badly wronged by life. She is concerned that he should find through her the warmth and affection which he has never known in a life of destitution and sickness (p.190). It is noticeable that her strong protective

feelings embrace both men whom she sees in much the same way as victims of the unrelenting hardship of existence. In these expository sections of the play the heroine is clearly established as a girl in whom maternal feeling is stronger than sexual desire. The prospect of the life which awaits her clearly fills her with some dismay, but she is nonetheless determined to accept it. Although she cannot at first overcome her reluctance to name the day of her wedding and commit herself finally to her new role in life, she shows no sign of going back (pp.207; 210). Before long the realisation that she bears Flamm's child makes her see that she must now marry August as soon as possible (p.224). She has no doubt, as she tries to tell the uncomprehending Flamm who finally waylays her in the harvest-field, that her soft-hearted and devoted fiancé will accept the child as his own, especially as she will show herself ready to make up for her mistake with a lifetime spent completely in his service (p.224). It would be quite wrong to suppose that her decision is really forced upon her by the fact of her pregnancy; this has already been taken with irrevocable finality when she made her decisive break with Flamm. She has already clearly seen the alternatives between which she must choose and she has committed herself wholeheartedly (if with great anguish) to the austere life which she feels must be hers. She still cherishes her love for Flamm which is the source of the greatest happiness she has ever known. But she has fully reconciled herself to the fact that this love can now be expressed only in her devotion to his child which will soon become the centre of her day-to-day life. At this point, it would appear, Rose has fully accepted her position.

The real crisis in Rose's life is brought about not by a lapse of purpose on her own part but by the intervention of Streckmann. This is a figure, we must note, with whom she has only had the slightest contact. He, however, has long been aware of her; he has been attracted by the consciousness of her strongly sensual nature - a consciousness which has clearly been inflamed by the realisation that she has been having an affair with Flamm (pp.192ff.). It is this unreciprocated desire of Streckmann's which brings confusion into Rose's life. He not only knows of her liaison with Flamm but, as is clear in the first act, is intent on using this knowledge as a means of forcing himself upon her (p.195). Once he has accomplished this, his vanity forces him to believe that she yielded herself freely to him and to imply as much in public (pp.221 and 229).[22] It is this and the further aspersions he makes when provoked, which enrage Bernd. He decides to take Streckmann to court to put right what he sees as an intolerable slur on his daughter's name (pp.236f.). This leads inevitably to a systematic legal enquiry in which events and relationships are forced into the open which would otherwise in all probability have remained hidden.

The intrusion of Streckmann and the court-case which follows it are, it is worth repeating, beyond Rose's control, yet they crucially disturb a situation which no longer seemed to have any danger for her. It is the legal investigation which brings those hidden facts to public knowledge which discredit Rose in the eyes of the community. In so doing it contrives to release resentments and suspicions which undermine her relationships with those to whom she is most profoundly attached. The effect of this enquiry in the end

is to thrust her out of the secure, ordered world in which she had lived and in which alone she could survive. The destructive force of this experience of dislocation is obvious, but it is not immediately clear how it comes into being.

Just after her humiliating experience of public interrogation Rose comes face to face with the Flamms, the two people who in their different ways have played a central, although constantly changing, role in her life since her mother's death. Now in their home where she has come and gone freely since childhood, she is made to realise just how much her position has changed. In the first place she is made to see that the woman who now confronts her, is no longer the same woman who had entered into her troubles with such sensitive and whole-hearted sympathy just a few weeks before. Now it is not as if there has been any shift in Frau Flamm's general attitude to Rose; on the surface this is exactly as it was. She does not withdraw her offer of help nor is there any doubt that her concern is still genuine (pp.241ff.). But after circumstances have forced Flamm to confess his involvement with Rose and he has demanded that she should continue to care for the girl, she seems no longer able to treat Rose with the same spontaneous warmth. Where she had been able simply to identify herself with Rose as a mother and enter completely into her troubles, there is now an element of constraint in everything she does.[23] Even though Frau Flamm herself is probably convinced she is acting just as before, this slight change in manner is enough to aggravate Rose's already severe sense of humiliation and to drive her deeper into a distraught embarrassed silence which nothing can break (242f.).

We have no means of knowing just how deeply Frau Flamm's change

of feeling affects Rose. There seems no doubt, however, that it is the brutal reversal of feeling on the part of Flamm which is the deeper and more destructive blow. When he hears that Streckmann has testified on oath that he has had sexual relations with Rose, he simply dismisses her straight away from his life (pp.243f.). He does not for a moment question the truth of this testimony given by a man he does not trust, or reflect what might lie behind it. He accepts it at its face value and draws the most obvious conclusion from it. He appears here as a man driven by a blind, destructive rage which has its root in wounded sexual vanity. The sense of concern he had felt towards Rose just a few minutes earlier is swallowed up in a devouring urge to pay her back for the wrong she has done him (p.244). The effect of this violent rejection on Rose can be gauged from her horrified, speechless astonishment:

"Rose starrt Flamm gross und entsetzt an!"

But the repercussions of her public exposure do not stop here. Shortly after the show-down with Flamm Keil tries to tell Bernd as gently as possible that there can now be no doubt that Rose has had an affair with either Flamm or Streckmann (pp.252f.). When the truth of this finally penetrates to the bewildered old man it is as if all his powers of affection were destroyed. Even when Rose finally comes to him and begs on her bended knees for some sign of love, he can feel nothing but the depth of the great wrong that has been done him (p.256). In the face of this rejection Rose seems overcome by a feeling of disabling helplessness:

"Sie bleibt zitternd, in die Knie gesunken, vor sich hinstarrend auf der Erde hocken."

The heroine's experience of inescapable catastrophe forms the

climax of the tragic action in 'Rose Bernd', yet the character and causes of this experience are far from clear. Seen from the outside her position does not seem hopeless. Two figures, Frau Flamm and Keil, both with considerable material resources offer her practical help and it does not seem as if her father would or even could stand in the way of her complete rehabilitation. But something has happened within her, some terrible certainty has come into being, which makes her incapable of receiving help. What also seems clear is that this destructive insight is born in her experience of her closest relationships. It would appear that Rose has always instinctively felt a sharp opposition between the world 'outside' and the world of intimate relationships, between an impersonal world where she is subject to feelingless investigation, humiliation and rejection, and the security of 'home' where she can count on understanding, support and love. Her disintegrating experience of break-down seems to be precipitated by the realisation that her ties with the Flamms, her father and even with August - ties which for the most part have enclosed her life since infancy - are not strong enough to give her the security she craves. Her experience of consuming hopelessness appears to arise out of her recognition that these relationships are not unchanging and unassailable as she had always assumed; that they are, although she herself would not put it in these terms, determined by a basic selfishness on the part of each individual which can never be overcome. This certainly seems to be what she has experienced in her different sexual encounters. Underlying all the apparent differences of feeling she has come to see a remorseless power of lust (p.256). Unwittingly she has become trapped in a bitter struggle for possession. Not only Streckmann

and Flamm but the mild, sensitive Keil (as he himself finally recognises) have been caught up in this unrelenting process of pursuit. In her final encounter with her fiancé Rose seems to be struggling to confront a disabling awareness of sexual desire as a blind, instinctual energy which operates in and through the individual but which cannot be understood or controlled by him.

This growing feeling of sexual vulnerability, however, cannot be seen in isolation. It coincides with, and is intensified by, another experience of abandonment which is still more elementary and destructive. In the final scene of the play it is made clear that Rose's relationship with her father is the very foundation of her emotional existence. It has been evident all along that she can only understand her life in terms of an overriding responsibility for his welfare, but it is only now that the force of this emotional attachment is fully disclosed. What is revealed here is a dependence of a kind which can only be described as instinctive; it seems to spring from an animal need for security and support which underlies and sustains all her other emotional capacities. Without this tie, it would seem, she simply cannot exist at all. In this climactic scene, however, she is made to realise that this love is not something which she can depend upon unreservedly; that this love, like Flamm's, is subject to conditions and can be abruptly and brutally withdrawn. This is the realisation which clinches her heightening awareness of forsakenness. It comes as the final confirmation of her certainty that there is no God beyond who can succour and redeem (p.256). It brings her face to face with a universe of blind meaningless cruelty. Her frenzied decision to kill her own child springs from a devouring horror of this universe

in which life is sustained by unending conflict and suffering.[24] Only in death, as she declares, is it saved from the senseless agony which she herself has had to endure.

In 'Die Ratten' as in 'Fuhrmann Henschel' it is a sudden death which undermines the apparent security of the protagonist's existence. Here, however, the blow has fallen three years before the action of the play begins, and the developments in the dramatic present merely reveal the final disintegrating effects of this experience of bereavement.

Right from the beginning there can be no doubt that Frau John has never recovered from the loss of her nine-day-old son. It does not need Quaquaro fairly late on in the play to tell us that she has been unbalanced since her baby died (p.781); already in the opening act she appears as a woman who has been seriously disoriented by her consciousness of loss and who is prepared to go to any lengths to recover the experience of motherhood. The obsessive force of her desire is apparent straight away in her treatment of Piperkarcka, the deserted girl whose baby she is planning to make her own. Here she shows herself capable of a self-detachment which is ominous in its ferocity (736ff.). Although she is herself so deeply identified with the experience of motherhood, she cannot see this girl as a mother but simply as an obstacle to be overcome, a bundle of fears and desires to be manipulated to her own ends. This same abnormal intensity is also revealed in her complete lack of concern about the immense difficulties involved in her plan of abduction and about the consequences of possible failure. These considerations, like everything else which has no bearing on her immediate purpose,

have simply no reality for her. She appears as a woman wholly possessed by a single compelling desire.

But although these signs of imbalance are clear enough, it is not until she has actually gained possession of Piperkarcka's baby that the real seriousness of her condition is revealed. Straight away, it seems, she is able to see herself as the child's mother, not just as its rightful mother but its actual mother (pp.757ff.). And this is not all. For much of the time she is completely convinced that this baby which she has seized by extortion and deceit, is in fact the same baby as she had lost three years before.[25] Now it is not as if this were a day-dream in which she indulges from time to time or a kind of game she allows herself to play. The tendency to identify the two children in her mind seems to be compulsive, to be determined by some subliminal drive which is completely hidden from her conscious mind. Some instinct in her, it would seem, has rebelled against the fact of the child's death and simply refused to accept it. Something, certainly, forces her to see in this lusty growing baby the same child which has been taken from her by death. It is as if she can only survive at all if she can see the baby which she has lost, thrive under her care. To find her way again she has (it would seem) to wipe out the past, to make undone the unspeakable thing that has happened. She can only face up to the harshness of life's demands, in other words, if she can inhabit a world which is responsive to the pressures of her own deepest needs.

It would be wrong, however, to see this motherly impulse of Frau John as a single separate part of her total emotional experience. It must be seen rather as a fundamental force informing all the close relationships which make up her day-to-day existence. It is, for instance, this same maternal impulse which governs her feelings

towards her younger brother Bruno. For much of his life it is in fact she who has been his mother in everything but name. Since the death of their parents it is she alone who has tried to provide a stable foundation for his haunted, restless life. Although he has never been able to find steady work and has even had trouble with the police, she has always taken his side and attempted to help him over what she regards as passing difficulties (pp.740f.; 811). The strength of her feeling for him can be seen in the fact that it has survived the opposition first of her father then of her husband. Despite the fact that John has forbidden him to come to the house and even threatened to shoot him if he does, she still goes on seeing him and treating him with the same protective concern (p.811). In the face of his repeated failures she keeps her faith in him as a goodhearted boy who has been misled and abused by a harsh, deceitful world. It is made clear at one point that this defiant, sheltering love is somehow bound up in her mind with her love of the newly acquired child. Since John has objected to her calling it Adelbert, the name of the child they lost, she has set her heart on calling it Bruno, after her maligned and much misunderstood brother (pp.760f.).

This strong maternal impulse also pervades her feelings for her husband. Although she is prepared to defy him to carry out what she sees as an inescapable responsibility towards her brother, she is in everything else profoundly sensitive to his hopes and desires and to the great needs which she senses behind them. As in her relationship with Bruno, her first concern is to protect him from the full crushing brutality of life. In particular, she is conscious of the great blow he suffered when their child died. Her memory is haunted by the image of his tear-stained face as he clung to the baby's coffin refusing to hand it over to the waiting grave-digger (p.759).

This is something which must be stressed. Her own sense of loss involves the awareness of the loss he has suffered and her desire to procure another child is linked inseparably in her mind with the desire to wipe out the agony inflicted on him. The child she pursues with such abnormal force, is not for herself alone; it will be a shared possession, the centre of her life with her husband. The child, she seems to feel, will bring them together as a family again.

This points to a tension in Frau John's feelings for her husband which can easily be overlooked but which is of considerable importance. The drive to support and protect which is so prominent in her attitude to him, is bound up with very different emotions which are equally powerful. Her desire to make good the disabling experience of loss he has suffered is linked with a strong sense of sexual longing. She is haunted by the feeling that her husband has gradually withdrawn from her and has begun to live his own separate existence (p.758). Her desire to restore to him the joy of fatherhood goes hand in hand with the conviction that the emptiness caused by the child's death has drained their life together of real warmth (pp.808; 810). Indeed she now lives in dread of a complete break-down of their life together (p.758). Even though she never discusses her fear in any detail, it is clear that it is the source of a deep confusing anxiety from which she is never free. The engulfing sense of hopelessness which follows upon her experience of bereavement, can thus be seen to have its root in a two-fold awareness of abandonment. Her fight to get possession of another child is not only a fight to regain the experience of motherhood; it is also an attempt to recover her husband's love which she feels

has been undermined by this disruptive experience of childlessness.

The compulsive force of Frau John's attempt to renew the two fundamental ties of her emotional existence reveals a mind already seriously undermined by the terror of complete abandonment. Her attitude to the abducted child in particular, it has been suggested, shows a serious mental instability which is not otherwise generally apparent in her behaviour. In the same way, her attempts to carry through her deception in the face of mounting opposition are beset by a confusion of feeling which is beyond her conscious control and which discloses some hidden fissure at the heart of her affective existence. At one level of impulse she seems to be driven blindly to pursue her aims whatever set-backs she encounters; at another she seems to be gripped by a paralysing feeling of powerlessness and of inevitable defeat.

Already in the second act it just needs the re-appearance of Piperkarcka to throw her into a state of profound confusion. The very fact that she is there and demands to see the baby is enough to shatter the world which Frau John has managed to create for herself.[26] And when in the end it becomes clear that Piperkarcka has registered the child in her own name and has given Frau John's name as its foster-mother, some force of resistance in her seems to snap. The shock is so great that she is thrust into a state of distraction which completely destroys her normal consciousness of herself. She continues her simple household tasks (as the stage-direction states) like a sleep-walker, then finally collapses in a fit of convulsive sobbing (p.773).

At this point it is as if Frau John were overcome by a sense of complete helplessness and instinctively acknowledged the futility of

all her efforts. But even if this is the case, she is still somehow compelled to go on fighting. Although the force of her reaction to Piperkarcka's disclosure suggests that it is the fear of a conflict with the law which really unnerves her, she still persists in seeing the girl as the source of her troubles. Although she knows in some part of herself that matters have passed out of the girl's hands, some instinct still tells her that the situation can still be saved if the girl can be defeated. In the grip of this conviction she commissions Bruno to frighten Piperkarcka into staying away from the house and renouncing her claim on the child (p.814). It is this plan of intimidation which she knows at one level of consciousness to be futile, which helps to bring into being a situation more horrifying and inescapable than any she could have foreseen. When she is made to realise that the violence she had tried to use has got out of control and that her brother has actually killed the girl, she is again seized by a feeling of stupefying helplessness. All her aims she sees here cruelly distorted. The brother she loves has become under her influence a man fleeing for his life, the child she was trying to protect, is now at the centre of a merciless police hunt (814f.). After she has taken leave of Bruno for what is probably the last time, she yields to a consuming, wordless despair (p.815).

It is noticeable that what precipitates Frau John's final collapse is not the awareness that she cannot escape the sanctions of the law or even that she must lose the child - the things which we must assume to be uppermost in her mind; this is brought about rather by the awareness that John, on whom she had counted for unquestioning support, has betrayed her. However much she had feared the loss of

his love, it is now clear that she still depended upon it as the final saving reality of her life. Throughout her final decisive encounter with him John acts as a man who is too limited in imagination, too deeply bound by his restricted moral preconceptions, to have any idea of what she has suffered. He is obviously unable to sense the terror which lies behind her confused, enigmatic words. His reactions to this great unpredicted crisis in his life are completely governed by the angry feeling that he has done nothing to deserve such a disaster. When he learns that Bruno is being sought for murder, he is concerned only with the thought that his family should be associated with this disgrace through his wife's failure to cut herself off from him (p.823). He is so enraged by this failure that he decides that she is not fit to bring up his child and that it should be handed over to his sister who will look after it with a greater sense of responsibility. The effects of this bitter denunciation on Frau John can be inferred from the hysterical force of her reaction (p.824). He, however, remains completely unrelenting, obsessed with the awareness of her failure towards him and his child. When at last he learns the full truth about the baby he had thought was his own, his sense of outrage knows no bounds. He accuses her of the premeditated murder of Piperkarcka and of being prepared to murder again to cover up what she has done (pp.827 and 829). Finally he completely rejects her and the child she has procured through crime. This seems to precipitate some terrible recognition in Frau John and at the same time to release an irreversible decision:

> "Nu soll et nich leben!...Nu jerade! [redacted]...Nu brauch et nich leben! Nu muss et mit mich mit unter de Erde komm[redacted]." (p.829)

It takes a few seconds for the sense of these distracted words to penetrate to John. All of a sudden he seems to grasp just what is at stake. But it is too late. Although the child is saved, no one can stop Frau John throwing herself to her death (830f.).

IV

One of the most striking features of these plays of Hauptmann's is that so little of the inward experience of the protagonist which is at the very centre of dramatic concern, is directly portrayed. The really crucial developments take place in unconscious or semi-conscious areas of his mind, and he seems quite unable to grasp these reflectively and communicate them to others. Moreover, although beset by recurrent intuitions of disaster the heroes in these plays have a peculiar power to react normally in most of the situations which arise in the course of their day-to-day lives. In every case the final break-down of the protagonist comes as a horrifying shock to all the other figures. Indeed, as we have seen, his final collapse is precipitated by a clash with someone who is very close to him, but who has no idea of the seriousness of his condition. Vockerat forces his son relentlessly into submission quite unaware of the violence of the upheaval within him; although Hanne notices Henschel's growing dependence with irritation, she has no notion of the possible consequences of her adultery; Bernd violently condemns Rose and Keil struggles to reassure her, but neither senses the immense despair which has engulfed her and driven her to kill her own child; John likewise has no idea of the terror which has gripped his wife and made her beg abjectly for his support. Within the world of the play a real understanding of the hero's

experience is possible only after his final break-down has taken place.[27] Only then is it possible for the other figures to sense the anguish which has lain hidden beneath words and actions which, although sometimes strange and confusing, seldom seem to suggest more than the relative depressions of ordinary experience.

Now it seems to me that the reader or spectator is in a position which, although differing from this in important respects, is still essentially analagous to it. This is not to say that our knowledge of the hero's situation can be identified with that of any of the other characters in the play; we have a vantage-point and a perspective which are quite separate and, so to speak, privileged. But we, like these other figures, can only hope to understand the hero's experience by looking back - by seeing it in the light of his final moral disintegration. Certainly, even as the play develops we can be in no doubt that the disturbance in his psychic existence is more far-reaching than those around him assume. Nonetheless for us too the final break-down of, say, Johannes Vockerat or Rose Bernd is both very sudden and unexpected. We, like the other characters, are puzzled by what seems to be a gap between what we actually <u>know</u> he experiences and what he suffers silently, in himself. We are unable, in other words, to relate his experience as something we can observe and, to some extent, measure to that private vision which grows out of this experience but which seems by no means identical with it. To put it at its most simple, there seems no clear observable link between the pressures inherent in his actual situation and the total despair which finally overwhelms him. What happens to him in the actual world comes to possess some terrible meaning for him; it seems to release or

crystallise some realisation which is too appalling to bear. But how this comes about, how precisely these events should acquire this significance for him, this is not made clear. We must assume that there is something in the disposition of these characters, some tendency or flaw in their emotional make-up which makes them unable to withstand this particular type of experience - an experience which in all probability would not be fatal to the other characters in the play and which they are therefore at a loss to understand. The problem is that there is no clear indication of just what this inner need or drive actually is. If we are to discover anything about it, we can only do it by looking again at the experience they have undergone in the light of the sudden and irreversible breakdown which is its issue.

The dramatic development in these plays has the effect of isolating the central figure from those around him. Throughout the action his behaviour can be seen to be determined by an attempt to uphold relationships which are of basic importance to him but which have come into conflict with one another. Johannes Vockerat is driven to reconcile his unacknowledged passion for Anna with his love for his wife and parents; Henschel similarly strives to relate his sense of a pure emotional attachment to his first wife with his hidden attraction to Hanne;[28] Frau John, as we have seen, is possessed not only by an abnormal longing for motherhood, but also by a driving need to assure herself of her husband's love. Even in 'Rose Bernd' the heroine's position is not as different as might at first appear. Her will to commit herself to a life without sexual fulfilment for her father's sake has the effect of unleashing strong sexual energies in her which have been suppressed throughout

her strictly disciplined adolescence. When she tries eventually to free herself from Flamm and put this part of her life behind her, the way is no longer clear: she finds herself trapped by the demands of men who have become aware of the deep sensuality of her nature she is now attempting to renounce.

In all, these plays (as also in a different way in 'Das Friedensfest') the central figure is vulnerable because his nature demands expression in two kinds of relationship. He does not seem to be conscious of any basic difference between these or of their possible discordance; he seems rather to regard them instinctively as interdependent and as finally inseparable.[29] However, in his particular circumstances this drive to express these different emotional impulses contrives to bring about a crisis in which his relationships come under strain and in which (as he sees it) they irreparably break down. The extent to which figures like Henschel, Frau John, Rose Bernd and Johannes Vockerat are dependent upon the sustaining power of their closest relationships is revealed in the absolute despair which arises out of this experience of abandonment. Perhaps only in 'Die Ratten' is there any clear sign of the abnormal intensity of this dependence in the hero's everyday life. But in all these other plays it is only at the climax of the action that it is suddenly made clear just what is at stake; this experience of rejection is shown to be absolutely destructive. It comes to him as a revelation not only of the specific alterable circumstances of his life but of his inescapable lot as a human being. It is an experience which can only be described as religious. It seems to shatter at one blow his instinctive faith in the goodness of life and, certainly in 'Fuhrmann Henschel' 'Rose Bernd' and 'Die Ratten', in the transcendent Providence of God. It reveals to him his

ultimate forsakenness in a violent universe governed by blind, unending processes of conflict.[30]

In his domestic tragedies Hauptmann is intent upon defining the conflict between a protagonist who is absolutely dependent on close, fulfilling relationships and a world in which such relationships are hard, if not impossible, to maintain. He sees this figure as existing in a state of insuperable estrangement; his needs are shown to be simply incongruous with the kind of response which the other characters are able to give.

This brings us face to face with the fundamental question which these plays insistently raise but which they never directly pose: is the hero's experience of estrangement to be seen as the index of an existential condition (as he himself supposes) or can it, in fact, be seen to be wholly determined by specific pychological-social forces? It seems to me that we cannot answer this question with any final certainty. The history of Hauptmann criticism shows only too well that it is possible to put forward and convincingly sustain both irreconcilable points of view. Almost all critics, however, have accepted that there are figures in these plays who are clearly presented as the victims of a specific social situation. Some of these who are very close to the protagonist - figures like Bernd, John and Vockerat - are seen as men whose awareness of life is rigidly controlled by socially enforced preconceptions and aims. Their failure to respond to the suffering which confronts them or to see the responsibility this places upon them, is shown to arise out of a more basic inability to grow beyond the structure of prescribed, habituated attitudes which controls their sense of their own identity.[31]

In the inadequacy of other characters like Hanne Schäl, Flamm and Streckmann the dramatist lays bare a similar failure. These are all presented as individuals whose unusual natural vitality has been warped by the pressure of constricting circumstances. They are all seen in their different situations as having been fettered by life and as having been driven unwittingly to regard the world as hostile, as something to be won in opposition to others. Their failure to achieve genuine relationships is seen as rooted in a driving self-regard which is itself shown to derive from a determining, although unconscious, view of life as a ceaseless struggle for power.

There can be no doubt that these figures are presented in clearly deterministic terms. Their behaviour is controlled by the operation of specific environmental forces and their failures reflect the weaknesses of a particular society. Their conception entails a clear indictment of accepted social norms and attitudes which is no less powerful because it is not explicitly formulated as such.

So far we have been moving on fairly safe ground. Few Hauptmann critics, I assume, would question the didactic aim underlying the dramatist's presentation of these figures, although they might well disagree about the place and significance of such social criticism in the conception of the plays as a whole. When we come to consider the dramatist's presentation of the central figure and his destiny, however, it is no longer possible to find any wide measure of basic agreement. Here critics' views have differed widely and often irreconcilably. Such differences of opinion seem to me to be inescapable and in the end unresolvable. We simply have no way of knowing what this crucial experience of the hero really involves or what its final implications are. He is consistently

distinguished from the other characters in these plays by the intensity of his emotional nature, by his unique ability to give and receive affection, and by the degree of dependence this involves. But it is precisely these distinguishing characteristics which we are unable finally to evaluate with any certainty. It is possible from one point of view to see the hero's peculiarly intense involvement with those closest to him as pathological in origin. It can be regarded as symptomatic of an infantile fear of freedom, of an inability to face existence except with the support of a dominant guiding partner.

On this view the involvement of the protagonist with a parent, husband, wife or child is essentially regressive in character: it reveals an emotional recoil from the demands of mature, independent existence. Positivistic interpretations along these lines have often been put forward especially in the early years of this century. And on their own terms they are, as far as I can see, unanswerable.[32] If such interpretations have become increasingly unfashionable it is not, I suspect, because they can be shown to be inconsistent with their own determining assumptions, but rather because these assumptions seemed to be inadequate to the complex imaginative character of the plays themselves and in particular to the dramatist's conception of the hero and his experience. At the heart of this reaction against the positivistic approach there lay a basic conviction that it was simply not possible to respond to these works with the degree of sceptical detachment which this approach presupposes. And as far as I can see, this conviction was almost always bound up with the feeling that the character and self-awareness of the central figure were too complex and too imaginatively demanding to be seen solely as the object of psycho-pathological investigation. This seems to me

to be a feeling which is fully in keeping with our direct experience of these works. Put at its simplest, we can say that figures like Henschel, Schilling or Rose Bernd do not appear solely as limited and deficient but as beings worthy of sympathy and, more significantly, of respect. What I for my part would like to stress is that the hero's controlling will to relationship which can be seen from one point of view as the symptom of arrested emotional growth, can also be seen as the source of qualities of compassion, sensitivity and generosity which generally distinguish him from the other dramatic characters. This unitive aspiration which might seem to denote weakness and inadequacy also makes possible a kind of awareness of life which is different in kind from that activating those around him. This awareness, moreover, acquires a considerable imaginative significance. It appears, as I see it, not only as incongruous with the forces of blind self-regard which control even the closest relationships in these plays, but as morally superior to them. There is, in other words, a clash between the quality of experience arising out of the hero's quest for relationships and the values it implies, on the one hand, and the assertive egoistic energies which are shown to determine the behaviour of the other figures, on the other. Seen in this perspective the hero's experience of estrangement does indeed pose a question about the nature of existence which is fundamentally religious. It forces us to question the nature of this aspiration which seems in such sharp contradiction to the world in which it comes into being. How are we to see this contradiction? Is it a purely relative phenomenon or has it any deeper existential significance? These questions are implicit in all these plays but it is only in the final act of

'Michael Kramer' that they are openly posed. Here the stricken father trying to make sense of the apparently meaningless death of his son senses a rift at the very heart of existence:

> "Warum bluten die Herzen und schlagen zugleich?
> Das kommt...weil sie lieben müssen. Das drängt
> sich zur Einheit überall, und über uns liegt doch
> der Fluch der Zerstreuung." (p.1169)

In the final sections of 'Michael Kramer', as also in 'Gabriel Schillings Flucht', the dramatist can be seen to be attempting to illuminate a reality beyond the confines of the actual, social world in which the dramatic action appears at first to be set. Kramer and Schilling in their very different situations are both possessed by the certainty that the experience of the senseless contingency of life which has threatened to crush them is in fact an illusion. Through despair they have attained to a vision of the creative unity of existence in which suffering and death are alike transcended.[33] As Kramer says at the moment of greatest insight:

> "Der Tod ist die mildeste Form des Lebens:
> der ewigen Liebe Meisterstück" (p.1172)

Within the realistic framework in which these works are still essentially conceived, such a vision cannot be dramatically presented except in terms of the subjective certainty of a particular character. It is not surprising that critics have constantly been puzzled by the apparent lack of any necessary connection between the scrupulously delineated portrayal of a specific catastrophe, on the one hand, and this ultimate redemptive certainty, on the other.[34] This concern to reveal a world beyond the limits of the concrete, historically conditioned situation is indeed at odds with the standpoint and perspective implied by the strictly realistic procedures which govern the conception of these works. At the same time, however, it seems to me that there is a strong mystical impulse in

the conception of Hauptmann's most strictly realistic works. This is an impulse which at once underlies and informs the workings of an imagination which seems wholly devoted to the minute observation of the actual. As far as I can see, it is only if we postulate such an impulse that we can hope to understand the experience of the protagonist in these domestic tragedies.

# Conclusion

# CONCLUSION

In 1852 Hermann Hettner attempted to define a kind of tragic drama in which a sense of destiny would be identical with an awareness of empirical processes:

> "Das Schicksal thront nicht mehr über und ausser der Welt, das Schicksal ist nichts Anderes als die herrschende Weltlage selber, von der jeder Einzelne abhängt; es sind die aus dieser Weltlage entspringenden Sitten, Begriffe und Zustände, die für den Einzelnen als Einzelnen durchaus undurchbrechbar und deshalb für ihn eine tragische Macht sind."[1]

All the plays we have been discussing in this study can be seen as "dramas of conditions" in the sense which Hettner is here proposing. They are all concerned in their different ways to investigate the existence of the individual in a specific corporate situation: to explore the far-reaching and largely unrecognised dependence of his moral understanding, his emotional life, his hidden fears and expectations upon the enclosing, sustaining life of a particular society. They are thus, albeit in different ways and in different degrees, fatalistic in a specifically modern sense of the term. However great the differences between them, these works all articulate an awareness of the personal life as vulnerable, often indeed as subservient, to the working of extra-personal forces. They are all intent on laying bare those pressures in the individual's environment which mould his consciousness and undermine his attempts to direct his own existence in ways which he himself cannot fully understand.

If we look at the works we have been discussing from this point of view, it is possible to see some fairly clear lines of development. If we compare the plays of Gutzkow, Ludwig and Hebbel

in the 1840's with those written some fifty years later, then some significant differences are at once apparent. It is immediately obvious that the conception of these later works is governed by a much fuller, more intellectually defined awareness of the different forces within and without the self which combine to shape the character of its existence. At the same time it is equally clear that these plays written under the guiding authority of Ibsen, are much more sophisticated in the ways in which they use the different agencies of the drama to bring to life a concrete environment, to realise in dramatic terms the dependence of the characters on specific intellectual and moral assumptions and on the customs, judgements and expectations in which these are variously embodied.

If we approach these plays from this angle, it is also possible to note in the course of this half century an increasing breadth and diversity in the actual social preoccupations of dramatists. Whereas most playwrights in the 1840's set out to portray either the restricted existence of the small provincial town or the relatively cosmopolitan life of the salon, dramatists later in the century were concerned more and more to represent new areas of corporate experience. In this respect the work of Anzengruber seems to me to be of particular significance. He was the first dramatist to conduct a serious, concerted enquiry into the conditions of peasant existence and to attempt to see its relations with the life of society as a whole. He was also the first dramatist to explore the economic relationships which bind together individuals and groups in the vast, impersonal structures of city life. Although Naturalist dramatists did not generally pursue these particular kinds of investigation, they were consciously concerned to extend the

imaginative scope of the drama in other ways. On the one hand, they were intent (although less than some of their theoretical pronouncements might lead us to expect) on bringing lower-class life on to the stage. In works like 'Die Ehre', 'Die Mütter', 'Die Familie Selicke' and 'Die Weber' we can see significant attempts to explore the experience of poor and largely inarticulate figures whose lives have been warped by the awareness of destitution and by the insecurity and resentment that this involves. In the last two plays indeed the dramatist has attempted to apprehend the dramatic action as the embodiment of tensions inherent in the lives of a group of individuals held together by their helpless dependence upon a common economic environment.

But this was not, I have suggested, the primary preoccupation of Naturalist dramatists. They were generally more concerned to explore the wider moral and intellectual implications of the crisis engulfing contemporary society; to consider the different ways in which it affected the attempts of the sensitive, enquiring individual to come to terms with his own complex and ramifying experience. Here again it is possible to see the shaping authority of Ibsen's influence. Within the terms of a specific development Naturalist playwrights were (like him) consistently concerned to disclose the force of an upheaval which was undermining many of the deepest assumptions which had traditionally shaped the self-understanding of Western man.

Our discussion has shown, however, that the strong expository drive variously apparent in the conception of these plays is almost always in tension with other imaginative impulses. We have repeatedly noted the concern of dramatists to relate analytical

insight to other modes of perception within a unified vision of existence. This search for synthesis took different forms. In many plays throughout this period the dramatist's attempt to demonstrate the individual's dependence upon impersonal constraints is closely bound up with a desire to reveal his ultimate self-responsibility. In the domestic dramas of Gutzkow and Freytag, in the conciliatory plays of Anzengruber, and in Naturalist works like 'Die Ehre', 'Die Mütter', 'Martin Lehnhardt' and 'Das Glück im Winkel' the playwright is at pains both to show the grip of habituated prejudices, fears and hopes on the deepest impulses of the individual's inner life and to suggest that such subservience is not final or inescapable: that the individual has resources in himself which enable him to achieve a genuine inner harmony and thus the power to take control of his own life. In our discussion of these different plays we have seen how difficult it is for the playwright who seems at first to be working within a strictly deterministic framework to realise in dramatic terms this progressive reintegration of the moral life. We have seen that it involves a shift of imaginative concern which tends to disrupt the impetus of the initial expository preoccupation. In plays as outwardly dissimilar as 'Graf Waldemar', 'Die Schule der Reichen', 'Heimg'funden' and 'Martin Lehnhardt' we have noted the dramatist's attempts to evade this difficulty by increasingly limiting the scope of his effective concern; by dissociating his perception of this spiritual development more and more from its wider social context and attempting to see it as a process only relevant to, and effective within, this one limited, and essentially isolated, existence. In all of these different works there is a perceptible tension between

social analysis and moral concern which, as I have tried to show, constantly threatens to undermine the unity of their conception.

In discussing these plays at least we can have the feeling (I think justifiably) that we are on fairly safe ground. We feel with some confidence that we can grasp the dramatist's aim and the effects he is trying to achieve, and that we therefore have some firm criteria in terms of which we can approach the completed works. However, it seems to me that when we approach most of the really powerful and demanding plays written in this period we lack all such clear-cut standards of judgement. Even when we do know the dramatist's intentions, we have repeatedly found that this does not really help us to meet the peculiar demands which these works make upon us. We have the feeling that we are being confronted with works which are in a distinctive sense experimental and which resist ways of approach, expectations derived from a study of poetic drama. When we confront works like 'Maria Magdalena', 'Fuhrmann Henschel' or 'Mutter Erde' we find ourselves in the grip of responses which are complex and often contradictory. To really come to grips with the peculiar problem these works pose, we must think again about the implications of realism in the drama.

The attempt to create a realistic social drama in the nineteenth century involved a decisive shift in the conception of dramatic language. Indeed, it would be truer to say that it entailed an attempt to develop dramatic language simultaneously in ways which were inherently at odds. In the first place it involved the attempt to organise the utterances of the individual figures in such a way as to articulate a comprehensive and detailed process of analysis. For in the drama, as opposed to the novel, it was very largely through the

statements of characters themselves caught up in the action, that the nature of the dramatic world had to be revealed. The motives of the different figures, the quality of their relationships with one another, the connections between these and the working of environmental forces - all of these had to be established largely through the words of individual characters struggling to come to terms with their particular circumstances. Seen from this point of view the creation of a realistic social drama presupposed the possibility of making the assertions of the different figures subserve an astringent expository purpose - of making dramatic language the instrument of diagnosis and substantiation.

Such a rigorously deterministic initiative, however, also necessarily implied an awareness of the individual character as dependent and therefore as vulnerable in ways which he himself cannot fully understand; it implied a view of all the dramatic agents as victims of a controlling situation over which they have very little control and which they are often not even able to see in its totality. This preoccupation with the experience of socially determined figures thus brought with it a concern to develop dramatic dialogue in a way which is necessarily in tension with a clear analytical purpose. It implied a new emphasis upon the shifting, inconsistent and often contradictory responses of the individual and thus upon the dubiety and ambiguity of his specific utterances. It involved a quite new mode of attentiveness to the pressures, inner and outer, affecting his reactions and impeding or distorting his attempts to come to terms with his own experience. The strong determinist impulse governing the conception of these social plays thus forces us to question with a quite new insistence

the ability of each dramatic figure to see things as they are and thus drives us to doubt the value of his every statement as a vehicle of exposition - as a means of illuminating the world beyond or even within the self.

In most of the dramas written in the 1890's under Ibsen's influence we can see a systematic attempt to integrate these two aspects of dramatic language. The attempts of Naturalist playwrights to realise a more comprehensive and systematic analysis of the causal processes determining the individual's existence, went hand in hand with a more meticulous concern to observe the actual character of his responses to changing circumstances. Their whole notion of a more systematic realism in the drama can be seen indeed to have rested on the assumption (which was rarely if ever critically explored) that analytical procedures could be assimilated to a consistently imitative method - that social-psychological diagnosis could be embodied in an apparent reproduction of actual existence.

When reading these social dramas, we are, as I have repeatedly emphasized, unusually conscious of the subjective character of all the individual's efforts to grasp and communicate his experience. Often we may feel quite certain of the kind of response this forces upon us. In some cases we may be convinced that we can allow for a degree of exaggeration or distortion and still penetrate to a basis of fact; in other cases when faced by the assessment of a particular figure or the conflicting assessments of different figures, we may feel equally sure that we must suspend all judgement. Such uncertainties may often in any case appear peripheral and to have little bearing on our understanding of the drama as a whole. But

on some occasions, as we have insisted, our whole attempt to comprehend and evaluate the dramatic situation is dependent upon the way in which we respond to the subjective vision of an individual figure - a vision which is neither finally confirmed nor refuted by what we indubitably know of this individual and of the world in which his life is set.

Now, it seems to me that in almost all the really challenging and compelling works we have discussed, the dramatist has intuitively acknowledged the peculiar ambiguity of the spoken word in the social drama and has attempted to exploit its unique expressive possibilities. In the plays of Hebbel, Halbe and Hauptmann, as I see them, the dramatist has grasped the isolation and self-estrangement of the determinate individual as the basis of what is in effect a new kind of dramatic form. Our responses to these works are pervaded by a fundamental doubt about the individual's power to penetrate and express his experience which is in general quite alien to our awareness of Ibsen's plays. They articulate a vision which no longer allows that clear counterpointing of spiritual experience and outward process which is basic to the structure of the Norwegian's dramas.

It is Hebbel's 'Maria Magdalena' which, I have suggested, stands at the beginning of this radical development. This work has a peculiar power to engage us at different levels and in ways which are logically incompatible. Indeed, as I have tried to show, it proposes with equal force two contradictory visions of existence. The heroine's own impelling views of her own life and destiny are directly at odds with the assumptions which seem to govern other aspects of the dramatic presentation. Seen from the point of view

of the dramatist's social enquiry she appears as a hapless being so deeply in bond to her environment that she is unable even to recognise her own absolute dependence. However, her own total conviction that she is freely giving her life for her father's sake and the consuming force of her self-sacrificial desire, drive us constantly to question the simplicity of the dramatist's determinist scheme. They force us repeatedly to ask whether her destiny may not in fact be controlled by some innate self-giving impulse which neither she nor any of the other figures can clearly recognise much less explain.

These two ways of apprehending the dramatic development co-exist, I have suggested, in direct contention. We have no means of overcoming this basic contradiction. The direct impression of Klara's absolute self-devotion collides with the apparently coherent evidence of the dramatist's social analysis of environmental forces. But although it repeatedly draws us to question the determinist interpretation, it does not, as far as I can see finally refute it.

This tense, exploratory energy informing the conception of 'Maria Magdalena' is characteristic of Naturalist drama at its most original and intense. As I see it, both Hauptmann and Halbe attempted in their rather different ways to realise a form of drama in which different modes of perception, different imaginative perspectives were in close, challenging interaction; a form which, although essentially realistic, could embody types of suggestion which were at variance with positivistic insight.

We have noted that in many of their works the self-understanding of the central figure entails a way of seeing which is in tension with the determinist assumptions which seem to control the conception

of the dramatic action. Certainly when we compare works like 'Fuhrmann Henschel', 'Rose Bernd' or 'Mutter Erde' with 'Maria Magdalena' it is noticeable at once that the inward experience of the central figure is much more closely and ambiguously bound up with the analysis of environmental forces. Often his subjective vision seems merely to reflect in another mode what is implicit in the social diagnosis; at other times it seems to overlap or coincide with this in ways which make clear separation difficult. But despite this more intimate association, despite the much greater subtlety with which hidden connections between inner feeling and outer pressure are progressively laid bare, it is still true to say that here, as in 'Maria Magdalena', the subjective view of the protagonist can be seen in the end to contradict the assumptions governing the dramatist's investigation of social processes.

As their experience of entrapment becomes more intense, figures like Frau John, Rose Bernd, Karl-Egon or Paul Warkentin all come to see the source of their suffering not in any specific weakness in themselves or in their subjection to any specific environmental pressures but in their situation as human beings. They come, as we have noted, to regard all those seemingly accidental circumstances and events which seem to control their lives, as the vehicle or process through which some transcendent antagonism is being worked out. It is not possible, I have claimed, to reject this way of seeing things out of hand. The vision of these figures is presented as both coherent and comprehensible on its own terms; it also appears to a large extent as completely compatible with the evidence of the social analysis. It goes far beyond this evidence, however; it presupposes dimensions of reality, modes of causation which are

beyond the scope of empirical enquiry. The illumination of the natural order in 'Haus Rosenhagen' or 'Mutter Erde' does seem to give strong preliminary support to the hero's view that life throughout the universe is sustained by an engulfing process of conflict in which only the strong and destructive can survive; but this is not in itself enough to still our awareness that his destiny seems equally explicable in purely positivistic terms. Similarly, in plays like 'Fuhrmann Henschel' 'Rose Bernd' and 'Die Ratten' the revelation of a driving egotism in the behaviour of the figures surrounding the hero might seem to confirm his belief that he lives in a barren, merciless world forsaken by God - a world in which all man's longings for community and love are fated to destruction. But although this belief is fully consistent with what we indubitably know of the dramatic world, it is not necessarily implied in this knowledge. Here too it is possible to see the causes of the hero's break-down in a specific, random conjunction of social and psychological forces.

It seems to me that critics have not on the whole really confronted the peculiar problems which these plays present. In their concern to show that their conception is informed by a genuine tragic awareness, they have generally proceeded from the conviction that the vision of the protagonist is the fullest and most reliable index of the world which the drama brings to life. They have assumed that it is his experience which unquestionably establishes the framework within which our whole understanding of the dramatic action must take place. When seen in this way these works do indeed seem to embody a process of destiny whose causes cannot ultimately be sought in the pressures of a specific social

situation or in any merely contingent developments in the empirical sphere. But although such a reading cannot be finally refuted, it is, as far as I can see, not true to the impression which these plays actually make upon us. For in these plays mythic suggestion is constantly offset by modes of presentation which are equally fundamental to their conception and which seem to force upon us a recognition of the self-sufficiency of the actual, phenomenal world.

However we ultimately regard these social dramas we have been discussing, we have at the very least to allow them a considerable historical significance. These works, it seems to me, reveal with peculiar force many of those fundamental tensions which pervade all the major literary developments in the second half of the nineteenth century but which are rarely so directly disclosed. They show in their very different ways that concern so characteristic of writers in this period to commit themselves to an increasingly rigorous use of discursive techniques of analysis and substantiation, while at the same time seeking to assert apprehensions of order and value which seemed independent of, and often in conflict with, empirical insight. These works at their best are shaped by that same creative drive to enquire and to correlate which, as I see it, informs the later works of Storm and Fontane; in the drama, as in the novel, this impelling exploratory energy can be seen to have given birth to substantially new forms of tense, questioning realism.

To my knowledge no critical work has yet undertaken to investigate the links between the drama and the novel in the latter half of the nineteenth century in Germany. So far almost all the extensive enquiries into the nature and implications of literary

realism have been conducted by scholars interested exclusively in the novel and the novella. It is now time to enlarge the scope of these enquiries - to attempt to probe the underlying connections between the novel and the drama in this period of radical literary developments.

## References

### Introduction

1. See M. Dietrich: Europäische Dramaturgie; Die Wandel ihres Menschenbildes von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart, Vienna, 1952, pp.262ff.

R. Mortier: Diderot in Deutschland 1750-1850, Stuttgart, 1972, pp.38ff.

R. Williams: Modern Tragedy, London, 1966, pp.90ff.

2. E. McInnes: The Sturm und Drang and the development of social drama, in: Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissen-schaft und Geistesgeschichte, 1972, p.61-p.81 (referred to subsequently as 'Sturm und Drang'); see also H. Arntzen: Die ernste Komödie. Das deutsche Lustspiel von Lessing bis Kleist, Munich, 1968, pp.60ff. (referred to subsequently as 'Komödie').

3. S.L. Bethel: Shakespeare and the popular dramatic Tradition, London, 1944, pp.13ff.;

N. Frye: Anatomy of Criticism, London, 1957, pp.282ff.;

S. Hampshire: Modern Tragedy, in: Modern Writers and Other Studies, London, 1969, pp.184-189;

D. Krook: Elements of Tragedy, New Haven, 1969, pp.81ff.,

O. Mann: Poetik der Tragödie, Bern, 1958, pp.13, 212ff. and 230ff., sees the tragic action, by contrast, as revealing a fundamental vulnerability of man which is not essentially affected by social processes. This view, as expounded by Mann, implies that any modern drama in which we experience a sense of the tragic is not really a social play at all in any real sense, since the social context of the action is merely emblematic of a timeless existential situation.

4. G. Steiner: The Death of Tragedy, London, 1962, p.8. This argument is more fully worked out in his discussion of Ibsen later in the book pp.290ff. (referred to subsequently as 'Tragedy').

## I The Development of domestic Drama in the 1840's

### Introduction

1. H. Marggraff: Deutschlands jüngste Literatur - und Culturepoche, Leipzig, 1839, p.348.

2. See H. Denkler: Restauration und Revolution. Politische Tendenzen im deutschen Drama zwischen Wiener Kongress und Märzrevolution, Munich, 1973, pp.7ff.; 178f. (referred to subsequently as 'Restauration'). W. Dietze: Junges Deutschland und deutsche Klassik, 3rd ed., Berlin, 1962, pp.121ff. (referred to subsequently as 'Junges Deutschland').

   F. Sengle: Biedermeierzeit. Deutsche Literatur im Spannungsfeld zwischen Restauration und Revolution 1815-1848, Vol. 1, Stuttgart, 1971, pp.151ff.; 199ff.; (referred to subsequently as 'Biedermeierzeit').

3. See Dietze, Junges Deutschland, pp.202ff.

   L. Koopmann: Das junge Deutschland; Analyse seines Selbstverständnisses, Stuttgart, 1970, pp.56ff.; 132ff.; and 153ff.

4. T. Mundt: Geschichte der Literatur der Gegenwart, 2nd ed., Leipzig, 1853, pp.28ff. (referred to subsequently as 'Geschichte').

   F. Kühne in: Blätter für die literarische Unterhaltung, 1833, pp.27ff.

   R. Prutz: Vorlesungen über die Geschichte des deutschen Theaters, Berlin, 1847, pp.371ff. (referred to subsequently as 'Vorlesungen').

   W. Alexis in: Blätter für die literarische Unterhaltung, 1841, pp.301f.

5. J. Hermand: Von Mainz nach Weimar (1793-1919), Stuttgart, 1969, pp.155ff.

6. H. Laube: Ausgewählte Werke, ed. H. H. Houben, Leipzig, undated, Vol. 11, pp.12f.; 111, 24ff. (this edition referred to subsequently as 'Werke').

   K. Gutzkow: Introduction to 'Zopf und Schwert', Dramatische Werke, 4. Gesamtausgabe, Jena, 1881, Vol. 1 pp.viiiff. (referred to subsequently as 'Dramatische Werke').

   Mundt, Geschichte, pp.598ff.

   Prutz, Vorlesungen, pp.398f.

7. Laube, Werke, 111 pp.148ff. See also H. Laube: Theaterkritiken und dramaturgische Aufsätze, ed. A. von Weilen, Berlin, 1906, pp.308ff. (referred to subsequently as 'Kritiken').

T. Mundt: Dramaturgie, Berlin, 1848, pp.77ff.

A. Henneberger: Das deutsche Drama der Gegenwart, Greifswald, 1853, pp.44f.

8. H. Laube in: Zeitung für die elegante Welt, 1833, pp.810f.

F. Kühne: Portraits und Silhoetten, Hanover, 1843, 1, pp.73f; 132; II, pp.127ff.; Mundt, Geschichte, pp.431ff.

9. B. Auerbach in: Europa, 1843, IV, pp.35ff.; Schrift und Volk, Leipzig, 1846, pp.93; 205ff.

A. Gubitz in: Die Grenzboten, 1846, 1, pp.166ff.

10. J. Braun in: Europa, 1843, I, pp.127ff.

G. Freytag in: Die Grenzboten, 1852, 11, pp.142f.;

R. Prutz: Neue Schriften, Halle, 1854, 11, pp.60f.

11. Laube, Werke, 11, pp.291ff.

W. Danzel in: Blätter für die literarische Unterhaltung, 1849, pp.182ff.

K. Frenzel: Büsten und Bilder, Hannover, 1864, pp.177f., noted in Gutzkow's domestic plays a tendency characteristic of the drama of this period to withdraw from public, institutional existence and to explore 'das innere Leben der Zeit.'

12. This is apparent in many of the widespread attempts to reconsider and re-assess the work of Iffland in this period. See eg. A. Stahr: Kleine Schriften, Vol. 11, Berlin, 1872, pp.11ff.; H. Oppermann in: Hallische Jahrbücher, 1841, 11, pp.193ff.; Allgemeines Theaterlexikon, 1846, IV, p.270;

R. Prutz: Vorlesungen, pp.371ff.

See also Sengle, Biedermeierzeit, II, (1972) pp.331f.; Denkler, Restauration, pp.70ff.

13. Laube, Kritiken, pp.308ff.; see also Werke, 11, pp.51f.; 202f.

14. Hettner, Drama, p.72.

15. Europa, 1841, IV, p.44; A. Stahr in: Hallische Jahrbücher, 1842, 1, pp.346f.; Die Grenzboten, 1846 IV, pp.126ff.

16. Die Grenzboten, 1844, IV, pp.1ff.

H. T. Rötscher in: Jahrbücher für dramatische Kunst und Literatur, 1848, pp.145ff.

17. H. Oppermann in: Hallische Jahrbücher, 1841, II, pp.188ff.

Hettner, Drama, pp.63ff.

R. Prutz: Epos und Drama in der deutschen Literatur der Gegenwart, Leipzig, 1854, II, pp.204ff.

## I (1) Inwardness and Dissent : Gutzkow's Domestic Plays and the liberal Drama

1. I have looked at this in detail in an essay entitled: Drama as Protest and Prophecy. The historical Drama of the Jungdeutschen, in: Maske und Kothurn, 1971, pp.190-202.

2. The most illuminating discussion of these aims is that in Gutzkow's Introduction to 'Wullenweber', Dramatische Werke, III, pp.3ff.

   See also K. Frank: Karl Gutzkows literarisches Werk als Ausdruck seines Zeiterlebnisses, Diss. Kiel, 1951 pp.21ff.; see also Dietze, Junges Deutschland, pp.202ff.

   F. Sengle: Das historische Drama in Deutschland, 2nd ed. Darmstadt, 1969, pp.174ff. (subsequently referred to as 'Drama').

3. Laube, Kritiken, pp.308ff.

   E. Metis: Karl Gutzkow als Dramatiker, Breslau, 1915, See esp. pp.40ff.; 68ff. This is the fullest and in many ways most perceptive study of these plays. It throws valuable light on the conditions under which they were written and on the various emendations which the dramatist felt forced to make. See also Sengle; Drama, pp.177f.

4. Laube, Kritiken, p.310.

5. See Arntzen, Komödie, pp.83ff.

6. 'Richard Savage' and 'Ottfried' are in: Dramatische Werke, Vol. III; 'Werner' in Vol. 1; 'Die Schule der Reichen' in Vol. IV.

   'Richard Savage' I, 5; II, 6; III, 2.

7. 'Werner', II, 3; IV, 1; 'Ottfried' 1, 6.

8. 'Werner' 1, 5; II, 4; 'Ottfried' 1, 4; 1, 6.

9. This desire was already alive in him on his first return to Schönlinde but he lacked the singleness of will to commit himself fully to it (1, 6).

10. See e.g. 'Werner', IV, 7; V, 7. 'Ottfried', IV, 1. In 'Liesli': Dramatische Werke, Vol. IV, the psychic disintegration of the heroine arises out of her emotional attachment to her husband and her instinctual and largely uncomprehended dependence upon her family heritage and surroundings. See especially II, 5 and III, 5. In 'Ein weisses Blatt' in: Dramatische Werke, Vol. II, the emotional confusion of the hero is brought about not by class-resentment or materialist desire but by a socially inculcated need to see himself as loyal

and just which threatens to destroy all spontaneity of feeling. See especially III, 3 and 4.

11. This is most fully expounded by Präsident von Jordan in 'Werner' IV, 6 and 7; V, 5.

12. See eg. 'Die Schule der Reichen', II, 2; III, 1.

13. 'Die Schule der Reichen', V, 5; 'Werner', V, 6 and 7; 'Ottfried', I, 4 and V, 8.

14. This tendency of moral concern is also clearly apparent in different ways in two later plays 'Lenz und Söhne' (Dramatische Werke, Vol. IV) and 'Ella Rose' (Vol. II). In the former work the will to philanthropic endeavour is explicitly rejected in favour of immediate involvement in a narrow sphere. See the climactic words of Lenz: "Der Freund muss dem Freunde leben, der Nachbar dem Nachbar, der Nächste dem Nächsten..." (V, 6). See also 'Ella Rose', V, 4 and 5.

15. This has been clearly shown by Metis, Gutzkow, pp.84ff.

16. E. von Bauernfeld: 'Zwei Familien', Vienna, 1840, II, 4; II, 9 and 10. This work was not included in Bauernfeld's Gesammelte Schriften, Vienna, 1871ff (referred to subsequently as 'Schriften').

J. Nestroy: 'Der Unbedeutende' and 'Der Schützling' are both contained in: J. Nestroy: Sämtliche Werke, ed. F. Bruckner and O. Rommel, Vienna, 1924ff, Vol. VII (referred to subsequently as 'Werke'). See esp. 'Der Unbedeutende' III, 13; IV, 3 and 17; 'Der Schützling', III, 30 and 33.

In S. Brill's study: Die Komödie der Sprache, Diss. Frankfurt/M., 1964, pp.191ff., the peculiar social-ideological position of these plays in the development of Nestroy's work as a whole is perceptively analysed.

G. Freytag: 'Die Valentine' in: Gesammelte Werke, Berlin, undated, VI, 1, 2; IV, 2 (referred to subsequently as 'Werke'). In 'Graf Waldemar' (also contained in Vol. VI) the analysis of this contradiction is very similar, although it is conducted here from a different point of view. See esp. II, 2 and IV, 2.

'Die Rechte des Herzens' in: O. Ludwig: Werke, ed. P. Merker, Munich and Leipzig, 1912 ff. Vol. V, pp.50ff. and 102ff. (referred to subsequently as 'Werke'). An identical sense of discrepancy also informs the conception of 'Die Pfarrose' (also in Vol. V), pp.288ff. and 332ff.

17. 'Der Schützling', IV, 17; C. Birch-Pfeiffer: 'Simon' in: Dramatische Werke, Leipzig, 1863ff., Vol. XII, V, 7; 'Die Valentine', IV, 2 and V, 1: 'Graf Waldemar', V, p.595

H. Laube: 'Gottsched und Gellert' in: Werke, Vol. II, V, 4 and 5;

'Die Karlsschüler, Vol. III, V, 4 and 5;

'Prinz Friedrich', Leipzig, 1845, V, 3;

E.von Bauernfeld: 'Grossjährig' in: Schriften, Vol. 5, see esp. V, 4. The love of Hermann and Auguste is clearly seen as intimating a significant movement towards social unification. But it is noticeable that the hero's new sense of social responsibility crystallises in a resolve to withdraw from his [illegible]cratic position to a life spent running his country estate and travelling abroad. There is, in other words, no attempt on the dramatist's part to suggest the actual character of the life of communal involvement which the hero envisages. W. Zentner: Studien zur Dramaturgie Bauernfelds, Leipzig, 1922, p.42, stresses the conciliatory concern of the dramatist, but I think he exaggerates the clarity and confidence of Bauernfeld's polemic concern. This hesitancy can be seen clearly if we compare his works written in the 1840's with his later dramas which are marked by a much greater assurance and general optimism of feeling.

18. W. Hazlitt: The Spirit of the Age, London, 1942, p.xxx.

19. In his analysis of Ludwig's 'Zwischen Himmel und Erde', for instance, in: Unterhaltungen am häuslichen Herd, 1857, Heft 17, Gutzkow exposed a serious split between the concretely perceived action and its imputed moral significance which is, I think, identical with that apparent throughout his own dramatic work.

20. One of the best analyses of these severe structural tensions in Gutzkow's plays is that by H. Bulthaupt: Dramaturgie des Schauspiels, 5th ed., Oldenburg and Leipzig, 1891ff, III, pp.257-312.

## (2) Otto Ludwig : Der Erbförster

1. G. Freytag in: Die Grenzboten, 1850, 1, pp.195ff.

   J. Schmidt: Geschichte der deutschen Literatur seit Lessings Tod, 4th ed., Leipzig, 1858, Vol. III, pp.384f. (referred to subsequently as 'Geschichte').

   B. Auerbach: Dramatische Eindrücke, Stuttgart, 1893, p.283.

2. H. Laube: Werke, IV, pp.212ff.

   R. Gottschal: Die deutsche Nationalliteratur des 19. Jahrhunderts, 6th ed., Breslau, 1891ff, Vol. III, pp.529ff.

3. B. Schatzky: Otto Ludwig's 'Der Erbförster' as a bürgerliches Trauerspiel, German Life and Letters, 1952, pp.267ff.

   F. Koch: Idee und Wirklichkeit, Düsseldorf, 1956, Vol. II, pp.84ff.

   F. Martini: Deutsche Literatur im bürgerlichen Realismus, 2nd ed., Stuttgart, 1964, p.195ff. (Referred to subsequently as 'Realismus').

4. See M. Dietrich: Europäische Dramaturgie im 19. Jahrhundert, Graz and Cologne, 1961, pp.288ff. (Referred to subsequently as 'Dramaturgie').

5. O. Ludwig: 'Der Erbförster', Werke, Vol, VI, erste Abteilung, pp.6ff. The final version of the play is printed here alongside the preliminary drafts and sketches on which Ludwig worked intermittently for more than five years.

6. That Ulrich's misunderstanding of the legal position is not governed primarily by intellectual failure is also suggested by the fact that other figures like Weiler, Wilkens and even the Försterin have a much firmer grasp of the issues involved. See e.g. pp.28ff.; 47f.; pp.52 and 86.

7. The importance of Wilkens' presence in the Ulrich household lies mainly in the fact that he offers to the Forester's wife and children the possibility of a financial security and future which is independent of him. In Act IV he actually persuades the Försterin to leave her husband and begin a new life far away from the Forest (pp.81f.).

8. Of the figure of the Amtmann who fulfils the same dramatic function as Möller in one of the earliest drafts of the play, Ludwig noted that he embodied, in contrast to the hero, "die frivole, atheistisch-materielle Richtung unserer Zeit" (p. 270).

9. Stein is also clearly aware of Ulrich's resentment of the

Buchjäger and seems at times, largely unconsciously, to provoke the Forester by emphasising his, Stein's, reliance upon him. He senses that the whole issue of thinning out the trees is made worse for Ulrich by the fact that it is the Buchjäger's idea, just as the threat of dismissal is the more menacing because this particular individual is proposed as Ulrich's successor. At the height of their argument, Stein draws attention to Ulrich's hatred of the Buchjäger with deliberate malice: "Du kannst nicht von ihm loskommen. Wie Teig hängt er dir in den Zähnen." (p.22).

10. O. Ludwig: Gesammelte Schriften, ed. A. Stern, Leipzig, 1891, Vol. VI, pp.355ff. (referred to subsequently as 'Schriften (Stern)').

11. See eg. pp.251 and 265f.

12. See eg. pp.233ff.; 256f., 270ff. See also the full summary of the action of the play which Ludwig sent to Gutzkow on the 6th of March 1847, quoted in Merker's introduction pp.XXIIIff.

13. See eg. the drafts written in 1846, pp.247f., 252 and 271ff.; and a later version from 1847, pp.351f.

14. Schriften (Stern), Vol. VI, pp.355ff. and 377ff.; see also p. 418.

15. To remove all possible doubt about the truth of the Forester's downfall Ludwig thought of revising the play yet again and giving the Pastor the following summarising speech:

> "Weh dem, der das Herz allein zum Führer durch das Leben wählt und dem nüchternen Wächter Verstand vorsätzlich die Augen bedeckt. Er macht sich zum Spiel jeden Zufalls, der niedrigsten Leidenschaft gibt er die Macht, mit eitler Larve ihn selber zu verderben." (p.207). See also Schriften (Stern) VI, pp.380 and 418.

## (3) Friedrich Hebbel : 'Maria Magdalena'

1. O. Walzel: Das bürgerliche Drama, in: Vom Geistesleben alter und neuer Zeit, 1922, pp.142-231 (referred to subsequently as 'Geistesleben').

   P. Fechter: Das europäische Drama, Vol. I, Mannheim, 1956. p.358 (referred to subsequently as 'Drama').

2. E. Dosenheimer: Das soziale Drama von Lessing bis Sternheim, Konstanz, 1949, p.82 and p.90 (referred to subsequently as 'Drama').

   E. Purdie: Friedrich Hebbel, London, 1932, pp.120ff. (referred to subsequently as 'Hebbel').

3. See Walzel, Geistesleben, pp.210ff.

4. McInnes, Sturm und Drang, pp.76ff.

5. In his famous discussion in the 12th part of his Foreword, Hebbel described the failure of domestic tragedy in Germany as stemming from the fact that "man es nicht aus seinen inneren, ihm allein eigenen, Elementen, aus der schroffen Geschlossenheit, womit die aller Dialektik unfähigen Individuen sich in dem beschränktesten Kreis gegenüberstehen, und aus der hieraus entspringenden schrecklichen Gebundenheit des Lebens in der Einseitigkeit aufgebaut." Cf. F. Hebbel: Sämtliche Werke, Historisch-kritische Ausgabe, ed. R. M. Werner, 1901 ff., erste Abteilung, Vol. XI, pp.61ff. (referred to subsequently as 'Werke'). See also his letter to Auguste Stich-Crelinger, 11th December 1843, Werke, dritte Abteilung, Vol. XI, p.348. 'Maria Magdalena' is contained in Werke, erste Abteilung, Vol. II.

6. B. von Wiese: Die deutsche Tragödie von Lessing bis Hebbel, Hamburg, 3rd ed., 1958, p.608 (referred to subsequently as 'Tragödie').

   E. Purdie, Hebbel, p.122.

   K. May: 'Maria Magdalene' im Zusammenhang der jüngsten Hebbelforschung, in: Dichtung und Volkstum, 1943, pp.32-61. See especially p.60 (referred to subsequently as 'Maria Magdalene').

   Dosenheimer, Drama, p.90.

7. Walzel, Geistesleben, pp.212f.

   Dosenheimer, Drama, pp.88f.

8. There were, on the other hand, frequent moral objections to Hebbel's conception of Klara's seduction. In early critiques of the play it was a common complaint that the motivation of her fall, however understandable as a psychological phenomenon,

lacked general, imaginative significance. See e.g. J. Schmidt in: Die Grenzboten, 1847, pp.501-513; F. Kühne in: Europa, 1848, pp.291-297.

9. H. T. Rötscher in: Jahrbücher für dramatische Kunst und Literatur, 1848, II, pp.146ff.

A. M. Wagner: Das Drama Friedrich Hebbels, Hamburg and Leipzig, 1911, pp.32f. and 236 (referred to subsequently as 'Drama').

K. Ziegler: Mensch und Welt in der Tragödie Friedrich Hebbels, 2nd ed., Darmstadt, 1966 (referred to subsequently as 'Tragödie'), pp.103ff.

K. May, 'Maria Magdalene', pp.37ff.

E. Dosenheimer, Drama, pp.83ff. The author characteristically emphasizes the fact that even the apparently accidental influences upon the tragic situation (like the loss of Klara's dowry, the impetuousness of the bailiff) are closely bound up with the assertive character of Anton.

10. F. Bamberg in: Jahrbücher für dramatische Kunst und Literatur, 1848, I, pp.135ff.

11. A. Tibal: Hebbel, sa vie et ses oeuvres. De 1813 à 1845, Paris, 1911, pp.537-574 (referred to subsequently as 'Hebbel').

Wagner, Drama, pp.237f.

Dosenheimer, Drama, p.84, writes: "Sie handelt nicht, an ihr wird gehandelt, sie geht nicht aus der Welt, sie wird aus ihr gedrängt."

12. Ziegler, Tragödie, p.103.

13. E. Kuh: Biographie Friedrich Hebbels, 3rd ed., Vienna, 1912, Vol. II, pp.57-74, (referred to subsequently as 'Biographie').

Purdie, Hebbel, p.114.

von Wiese, Tragödie, p.614.

14. E. Purdie, Hebbel, speaks of Klara as becoming "active through suffering" (p.114), yet also describes her as being "almost equally in bond to her environment" as her father (p.121). Her ultimate assessment of the play rests upon the traditional assumption that the "milieu constitutes the tragic necessity" (p.120). von Wiese, Tragödie, claims that in the figure of Klara "eine höhere Sittlichkeit des Duldens" is embodied and sees the character in fact as achieving "etwas von dem Adel reiner Menschlichkeit" (p.615). Yet he also attempts to see the total tragic process as demonstrating how "ein hilfloser und seiner gesellschaftlichen Umgebung wehrlos ausgelieferter Mensch, aus der Welt herausgedrängt wird". This last quotation shows a substantial acceptance of Hebbel's own theoretical comments on the play.

15. W. Fischer: Hebbel. 'Maria Magdalena', 2nd ed., Frankfurt/M.,1963, pp.30-36, sets side by side quotations from the interpretations of Ziegler and May without acknowledging in any way that these interpretations rest on contradictory assumptions.

16. May, 'Maria Magdalene', pp.39f.

17. May, 'Maria Magdalene', pp.41f. Klara's act represents in May's view a transforming force of reconciliation at the heart of the tragic action: "In Klaras Opfer hat Hebbel die Lösung, die Erlösung für die Welt Meister Antons gedichtet." (p.54).

18. M. Stern: Das zentrale Symbol in Hebbels 'Maria Magdalena', in: Hebbel in neuer Sicht, ed. H. Kreuzer, Stuttgart, 1963, pp.228-246 (referred to subsequently as 'Symbol').

    J. Müller: Zur motivischen und dramaturgischen Struktur von Hebbels 'Maria Magdalena'. In: Hebbel Jahrbuch, 1968, ed. L. Koopmann, Heide in Holstein, pp.45-76.

19. Ziegler, Tragödie, pp.103ff.; Tibal, pp.540ff.; Dosenheimer, Drama, p.84.

20. Stern, Symbol, pp.230 and 237.

21. J.M.R. Lenz: 'Der Hofmeister', IV, 2 and 4.

    H. L. Wagner: 'Die Kindermörderin', VI, pp.509ff.

    References to these plays are to: Sturm und Drang. Dramatische Schriften, ed. E. Loewenthal and L. Schneider, Heidelberg undated.

    E. Raupach: 'Der Müller und sein Kind' in: Dramatische Werke ernster Gattung, 1835ff. Vol. III, II, 5; IV, 2.

    K. Gutzkow: 'Liesli' in: Werke, Vol. IV; see esp. III, 6 and 7.

22. At the moment of deepest disaster Anton's concern is not with the cause of her death but with its appearance in the eyes of the community. This is revealed in his spontaneous attempt to refute the report of the girl who claimed to see the act of suicide: "Die soll sich's überlegen, eh' sie spricht! Es ist nicht hell genug, dass sie das mit Bestimmtheit hat unterscheiden können!" (p.70).

23. Cf. e.g. F. Bamberg in: Jahrbücher für dramatische Kunst und Literatur, 1848, I, pp.46ff.

24. The symbolic function of the figure has generally been strongly emphasized by Hebbel criticism. See e.g. A. M. Wagner, Drama, p.237.

    H. Sievers: 'Maria Magdalena' auf der Bühne, Berlin and Leipzig, 1933, p.10.

25. F. Hebbel: Tagebücher in: Werke, 2te Abteilung, Vol. I, Nr. 1516, 24th February, 1839.

26. Rees shows clearly in his fine Introduction to his edition of 'Maria Magdalena', Oxford, 1944, (pp.xxvii-xxxii) that pre-occupations with sexual attachment and morality apparent throughout Hebbel's work in the previous years are here brought to a point of final crystallisation.

27. A clear, if negative, indication of the complexity of Hebbel's apprehension of Klara is his violent dismissal of the figure of Marie in Lenz's 'Die Soldaten'. His argument that such sexual vulnerability could not be made the basis of a significant moral destiny seems equally to call in question the potentially tragic status of his own heroine as this is defined in his analytical scheme. F. Hebbel: Tagebücher, Vol. I, Nr. 1471, 2nd February, 1839.

28. The Pastor for example has an overtly choric function in 'Der Erbförster'. See esp. pp.49ff; 74ff. See also p.207.

    Similar in conception are the figures of Dr. Fels in 'Werner', (see esp. II, 3 and 5; V, 6) and that of Hiller in 'Graf Waldemar' (see esp. II, 2; III, I and IV, 2.)

29. There are particularly obvious examples of such interpretative use of stage-directions in 'Der Erbförster'. See e.g. pp. 19 and 25.

30. See below pp.250ff.; 344ff.

31. V. Klotz: Geschlossene und offene Form im Drama, 3rd ed. Frankfurt/M., 1968. Klotz has done much for the understanding of formal developments in the drama since the Sturm und Drang. But his account needs some important qualification. In his concern to propose an 'open form' as a dialectical counterpart to the 'closed', classical structure he is forced largely to ignore the central development of realism in drama in the 19th century. This was shaped in the work of Hebbel and Ludwig, Ibsen and Hauptmann by a consistent will to assimilate the pressures of empirical insight to inherited modes of dramatic structure. Their common concern was to extend and renew existent patterns of formal awareness in drama, to make them responsive to analytical insight. 'Maria Magdalena' is a prime example of such a synthesising impulse.

## (II) Ludwig Anzengruber and the Viennese Popular Theatre

### Introduction

1. Martini, Realismus, p.230.

2. R. Arnold: Von der Romantik bis zur Moderne, in: Das deutsche Drama, ed. R. Arnold, Munich, 1925, pp.481-650; esp. pp.634ff. (referred to subsequently as 'Drama'). See also H. Bulthaupt: Dumas, Sardou und die jetzige Franzosenherrschaft auf der deutschen Bühne, Berlin, 1888, pp.5ff. (referred to subsequently as 'Dumas').

3. O. Blumenthal: Theatralische Eindrücke, Berlin, 1885, pp.252, 283ff. and 317.

   E. von Bauernfeld: Gesammelte Aufsätze, ed. S. Hock, Vienna, 1905, pp.47ff. See also B. Litzmann: Das deutsche Drama in den literarischen Bewegungen der Gegenwart, 3rd ed., Hamburg and Leipzig, 1896, pp.31ff. (referred to subsequently as 'Drama').

4. J. Bab: Naturalismus, in: Arnold, Drama, p.645. See also M. Martersteig: Das deutsche Theater im neunzehnten Jahrhundert, 2nd ed., Leipzig, 1924, pp.517ff.

5. Bulthaupt, Dumas, pp.31f.

   E. Wolff: Oskar Blumenthal, Berlin, 1888, pp.14ff.

6. Martini, Realismus, pp.230ff.

7. A. Kleinberg: Ludwig Anzengruber. Ein Lebensbild, Stuttgart and Berlin, 1921, pp.8f. (referred to subsequently as 'Anzengruber').

   A. Bettelheim: Ludwig Anzengruber, Dresden, 1891 pp.8ff. (referred to subsequently as 'Anzengruber').

8. L. Anzengruber: Briefe, ed. A. Bettelheim, Stuttgart, 1902, 1, pp.54, 62, 95 and 289 (referred to subsequently as 'Briefe'). See also Bettelheim, Anzengruber, pp.68ff.

9. Laube, Kritiken, pp.54f.

   In recent years there has been quite a revival of critical interest in the work of Anzengruber. K. S. Guthke in his 'Die Mythologie der entgötterten Welt', Göttingen, 1971, pp.226ff. and 229f., has given a most interesting discussion of the dramatist's philosophical writings. W. Dietze in: Erbe und Gegenwart, Berlin, 1972, p.58-p.134, has succeeded in giving a stimulating general account of his work within a very narrow compass. The two most important full-length studies of

Anzengruber's work in my opinion are:

> L. Koessler: Louis Anzengruber; auteur dramatique, Diss. Strassbourg, 1943 (referred to subsequently as 'Anzengruber'); and W. Martin: Der kämpferische Atheismus Ludwig Anzengrubers, Diss. Berlin (East), 1960 (referred to subsequently as 'Atheismus').

But helpful as these two studies are, they both share (with Dietze's) one basic limitation: they are in their different ways so much in sympathy with Anzengruber's ideological and moral attitudes that they are unwilling even to consider the possibility that his creative work is not completely subordinate to his intellectual intentions. This is something which we will have to discuss in detail.

10. See Otto Rommel's comments on the pressures and effects of censorship on the dramatists' work in:

> L. Anzengruber: Sämtliche Werke. Kritisch durchgesehene Gesamtausgabe in 15 Bänden, ed. R. Latzke and O. Rommel, Vienna, 1920-2. Vol. II. pp.134ff.; Vol. III, pp.314f.; 327ff.; Vol. IV, 506ff. (referred to subsequently as 'Werke'). See also Bettelheim, Anzengruber, p.84.

11. Anzengruber, Briefe, pp.289ff.

    See also Rommel's discussion of the dramatist's relations with the popular theatre in:Werke, II, pp.585ff. These relations are also perceptively analysed in: Deutsch-Österreichische Literaturgeschichte, ed. J. Nagl and J. Zeidler, Vienna, 1899 ff., Vol. III, pp.832ff.

12. See Koessler, Anzengruber, pp.349f.

13. See in particular Anzengruber's important essay 'Der Tod auf der Bühne,' Werke, XV, lll, pp.15ff.

14. Anzengruber, Briefe, I, pp.291f. See also Koessler, Anzengruber, pp.46ff. and M. Wahl: Das deutsche Bauerndrama seit Anzengruber, Diss. Heidelberg, 1934, pp.21ff. (referred to subsequently as 'Bauerndrama').

15. O. Rommel: Die Alt-Wiener Volkskomödie, Vienna, 1952, pp. 973ff., has convincingly shown the different social and historical developments which led to the inevitable collapse of the popular theatre.

16. See e.g. A. Müller - Guttenbrunn: Im Jahrhundert Grillparzers, Vienna, 1893, pp.162ff; Koessler, Anzengruber, pp.461f.

    Anzengruber criticism has consistently failed to see the basic

difficulty involved in ascribing an intense tragic power to these plays. Commentators have accepted almost without exception that they embody a severely critical analysis of contemporary society, yet at the same time they have seen them as expressing a vision of life which is "tragic." If these works do consistently demonstrate the subservience of the individual life to environmental processes, it is hard to see how they can elicit an effect which could be called tragic in any accepted sense. A. Kleinberg's discussion of 'Der Meineidbauer', Anzengruber, pp.172f., shows this confusion in a peculiarly obvious way. He defines this play as a "hohe Charakter - und Problemtragödie" without explaining how a work conceived as an exemplification of a social problem could also assert a view of the uniqueness of character powerful enough to qualify as tragic.

## (I) The Peasant Plays

1. See Anzengruber's Schlusswort to 'Sternsteinhof', Werke, X, pp.369f. and Briefe, II, pp.42, 85, 91. See also Wahl, Bauerndrama, pp.18ff.

2. The wry comment by Schrauber in "Heimg'funden", Werke, VI, p.293, is close to the dramatist's own view of life in modern society: "... wir leben eben in keinem Heldenzeitalter, fast jeder von uns besitzt inneren Mut, aber der äussere fehlt uns..." Anzengruber was also clearly repelled by what he felt to be a lack of genuine passion in the work of the French social dramatists and of Ibsen. See esp. Werke, XV, 111, pp.10 and 55. See also F. Mehring: Zur Literaturgeschichte von Hebbel bis Gorki, Berlin, 1929, pp.99f.

3. See Rommel's discussion of the peasant plays, Werke, II, pp.410ff. See also Bettelheim, Anzengruber, p.155.

4. 'Der Pfarrer von Kirchfeld' and 'Der ledige Hof' are in Werke, Vol. II; 'Der Meineidbauer', 'Hand und Herz' and 'Stahl und Stein' are in Vol. III; 'Der G'wissenswurm', 'Die Kreuzelschreiber' and 'Doppelselbstmord' are in Vol. IV. See esp. 'Der Pfarrer von Kirchfeld', pp.51ff.; 'Der Meineidbauer' pp.47ff.; 'Die Kreuzelschreiber' pp.59ff. and 70ff.; 'Doppelselbstmord', pp.231ff.

5. 'Die Kreuzelschreiber, pp.70ff. 'Der G'wissenswurm', pp.129ff. 'Der Meineidbauer', pp.52ff. and 93ff.; 'Doppelselbstmord', pp.231ff. See also 'Eisgärtel', Werke, XV, 11, pp.27ff., and 40f. and Vols. XI, pp.203f., and XIV, pp.122f.

6. Note the characteristic exclamation of Grete in ''s Jungferngift', Werke, IV, p.270: "Ob's a Grashalm is oder a Tannabam, ma tut sich ja nur verwundern, dass überhaupt was gibt." See also 'Der G'wissenswurm', pp.156ff.

7. 'Die Kreuzelschreiber', p.73. Rommel has emphasised the central importance of this figure for Anzengruber's work as a whole, Werke, II, pp.443f.

8. 'Der Pfarrer von Kirchfeld', pp.55ff. 'Der ledige Hof', Werke, II, pp.156ff. and 167ff.

9. 'Doppelselbstmord', pp.185ff. and 194ff.; 'Der Meineidbauer', pp.93ff.; 'Der G'wissenswurm', pp.128ff. and 165ff.

10. 'Der G'wissenswurm', pp.99ff. and 130ff.; 'Stahl und Stein' pp.206ff. and 245ff.; 'Der Meineidbauer', pp.55ff.; 'Hand und Herz', pp.147ff.

11. 'Die Kreuzelschreiber', pp.39ff.; 'Der ledige Hof', pp.167ff.

12. This is most clearly seen in the fact that despite his own

seemingly aggressive claims to his inheritance, he spontaneously accepts the rights of Vroni. See esp. pp.71ff. and 93ff.

13. See E. McInnes: Lessing's 'Hamburgische Dramaturgie' and the Theory of the Drama in the 19th century, in: Orbis Litterarum, 1973, pp.293-318.

14. 'Hamburgische Dramaturgie' in: Lessings Werke, ed. J. Petersen and W. von Olshausen, Berlin, 1925-9, Vol. V, Stück 30, pp.139f.

15. A. W. Schlegel: Vorlesungen über die dramatische Kunst und Literatur, ed. E. Lohner, Heidelberg, 1967, Vol. II, pp.172ff.

16. Dietrich, Dramaturgie, pp.294ff.

17. F. Grillparzer: Sämtliche Werke, ed. P. Frank and K. Pörnbacher, Munich, 1960, ff., Vol. I, pp.809f.,812, 829 (referred to subsequently as 'Werke').

18. Grillparzer, Werke, II, p.69: See Lysander's words:

> "Was mir bestimmt, ich will's, ich werd's erfüllen:
> Kein Sterblicher hält Götterwalten auf."

19. Grillparzer, Werke, I, p.912.

20. Grillparzer, I, p.1077. See also Helen Gardner's penetrating comments on the notion of 'hubris' in: Shakespeare Criticism 1935-1960, ed. A. Ridler, London, 1963, pp.363ff.

21. The comedies are the only works of Anzengruber's which have a close organic relationship with the living tradition of popular drama. In these highly stylised works, as Rommel's comments suggest (Werke, II, pp.440ff., 451ff., 461ff.), he was able to use inherited modes of action, characterisation and symbolism with much greater ease than elsewhere. It is noticeable too that in these comedies the disturbed, deluded figure is thrust largely into a passive position, while the development of the plot is controlled by "providential" agents of enlightenment (Hornlacher Lies, Steinklopferhanns Agerl and Poldl). The formal uncertainty in the dramatist's work is most clearly apparent on those occasions when he is forced to negotiate an ambivalent awareness of the destructive energies embodied in the figure of the protagonist.

22. Rommel has discussed Anzengruber's attitude to these plays in detail in Werke, II, pp.585ff. See also pp.366ff.

23. Weller's murder of Georg ('Hand und Herz', p.172) also seems determined more by his unique temperament than by the particular legal situation in which he is trapped. He appears primarily as a figure whose total, Othello-like disposition to love and trust is suddenly perverted into an expression of searing hatred.

24. Laube, Kritiken, pp.154f.

25. 'Hand und Herz', pp.171f.; See also 'Der ledige Hof', pp.164f.

26. 'Der Meineidbauer', pp.55ff.

27. In Augustine's 'City of God' the primordial experience of fraternal envy is seen as the force which brings into being the earthly city and which symbolises dramatically the essence of all human history. The City of God, transl. J. Healey, London, 1945, Bk. XV, Chs.4 and 5, Vol. II, pp.63ff. Ferner's idolatrous love of his daughter (a precipitating motive in his crime) and strained hostility to his son (whom he comes close to murdering on two occasions) are also vibrant with mythical overtones. Believing that he has killed his son he dies with his daughter's name upon his lips (p.90). Both here and in 'Stahl und Stein' there is a powerful, although unconscious, impulse to explore the tensions of what can be seen as an oedipal situation.

28. O. Brahm: Kritiken und Essays, ed. F. Martini, Zurich, 1964, pp.167ff. and 263ff. (referred to subsequently as 'Kritiken').

P. Schlenther in: Freie Bühne, 1891, pp.264ff.; see also F. Servaes in: Freie Bühne, 1890, pp.1107ff.

## (2) The Viennese Plays

1. Apart from some interesting contemporary notices there are remarkably few fruitful discussions of Anzengruber's Viennese plays. Otto Rommel's observations, Werke, II, pp.493ff. are as always very illuminating and the most substantial comments on these plays which we possess. There are also some brief but penetrating remarks in Koessler, Anzengruber, pp.120ff., and 259f.

2. 'Elfriede', 'Die Tochter des Wucherers' and 'Das vierte Gebot' are in Werke, Vol. V;

   'Ein Faustschlag' and 'Heimgfunden', are in Vol. VI. See especially 'Elfriede', pp.9ff.;

   'Die Tochter des Wucherers', pp.121ff.; 135ff.;

   'Ein Faustschlag', pp.56ff.; 85ff.

   'Heimgfunden', pp.397ff.

3. 'Die Tochter des Wucherers', pp.69ff. and 135ff.

4. 'Das vierte Gebot', pp.156ff.

5. 'Heimgfunden', pp.362ff.

   'Ein Faustschlag', pp.84ff.

   'Elfriede', pp.42ff.

6. 'Das vierte Gebot', pp.228ff. and 234ff. See also 'Alte Wiener', Werke, VI, pp.293ff. and 309ff.; 'Heimgfunden', pp.310ff.

   In other instances, on the other hand, the dramatist is at pains to attribute to the child an ability to resist adverse influence, an incorruptibility, which is nothing short of Dickensian. This is especially noticeable in 'Ein Faustschlag', pp.8ff. and 50ff.

7. See E. Hes: Charlotte Birch-Pfeiffer als Dramatikerin, Breslau, 1914, pp.114ff. See also O. Brahm in: Freie Bühne, 1890, pp.752ff.

8. McInnes, Sturm und Drang, pp.61ff. See also above pp.15ff.

9. The tensions in the structure of 'Das vierte Gebot' have been perceptively discussed by Koessler, Anzengruber, pp.348ff.

10. Das vierte Gebot, pp.162f. and 213f.

11. See below pp.172ff.

## Conclusion

1. In this undertaking he was, it is true, greatly influenced by developments in the contemporary novel and novella. Koessler, Anzengruber, pp.46ff., has rightly emphasized the great influence of Auerbach's work upon the dramatist.

2. This is not to say that before Anzengruber no plays were set in cities. Gutzkow's 'Richard Savage', for instance, was set mostly in London and many of Bauernfeld's works were set in Vienna. But these dramas, like so many others, depicted the upper-class and relatively cosmopolitan life of the salon. As far as I can see Anzengruber was the first German-speaking playwright to examine closely relationships between individuals which are determined by the impersonal economic processes of urban existence.

3. This is particularly striking in 'Das vierte Gebot'. At the moment of possible decision both Hedwig (pp.163f.) and Josepha (pp.213f.) admit that they are acting in defiance of what they know in themselves to be right. Looking back Martin similarly confesses to Eduard Schön that since he was a child he had sensed in the outlook and way of life of the Schöns a standard to which he should aspire but that something prevented him from doing so (pp.232ff.).

## III NATURALISM

### (1) Naturalist dramatic Theory and the dramaturgical Tradition

1. H. & J. Hart: Kritische Waffengänge, Leipzig, 1882-4. See esp. Vol. I (1882), pp.4ff. (referred to subsequently as 'Waffengänge').

   K. Bleibtreu: Revolution der Literatur, Leipzig, 1886. See esp. pp.12ff. and 30ff. (referred to subsequently as 'Revolution').

   J. Osborne: The Naturalist Drama in Germany, Manchester, 1971, pp.2-22, has given a particularly informative and lucid survey of this early phase in the development of Naturalism (referred to subsequently as 'Drama').

2. H. & J. Hart, Waffengänge, II, (1882), pp.44ff.; V, (1883), pp.59ff.

   C. Alberti: Natur und Kunst, Leipzig, 1890, pp.21ff. (referred to subsequently as 'Natur').

   W. Bölsche: Die naturwissenschaftlichen Grundlagen der Poesie, Leipzig, 1887. See esp. pp.2ff. (referred to subsequently as 'Grundlagen').

3. E. Steiger: Der Kampf um die neue Literatur, Leipzig, 1889, pp.23ff. (referred to subsequently as 'Kampf').

   R. Cowen: Der Naturalismus. Kommentar zu einer Epoche, Munich, 1973, pp.68ff. (referred to subsequently as 'Naturalismus').

   W. H. Root: German Criticism of Zola, New York, 1931, pp.37ff. (referred to subsequently as 'Zola').

4. H. Praschek: Das Verhältnis von Kunsttheorie und Kunstschaffen im Bereich der deutschen naturalistischen Dramatik, Diss. Greifswald, 1957, pp.10ff. and 156f. (referred subsequently as 'Kunsttheorie'). See also Osborne, Drama, pp.156 and 162ff.

5. Bölsche, Grundlagen, pp.34ff. and 45.

   Alberti, Natur, pp.21ff.

   E. Wolff: Zwölf Jahre im literarischen Kampf, Oldenburg and Leipzig, 1901, pp.103f.; 140ff. (referred to subsequently as 'Jahre').

   L. Berg: Der Naturalismus, Munich, 1892, p.129. (referred to subsequently as 'Naturalismus').

6. M. Conrad: Madame Lutetia!, Leipzig, 1883, pp.361ff.;

Alberti, Natur, pp.54ff.;

B. Markwardt: Geschichte der deutschen Poetik, Vol. V, Berlin, 1967, pp.70ff. (referred to subsequently as 'Poetik').

7. Bölsche, Grundlagen, pp.13ff.; Alberti, Natur, pp.24ff.

E. Wolff: Geschichte der deutschen Literatur in der Gegenwart, Leipzig, 1896, pp.142ff. (referred to subsequently as 'Geschichte').

8. C. Flaischlen in: Freie Bühne, 1892, pp.643ff.

E. Steiger: Das Werden des neuen Dramas, Berlin, 1898, 2 vols., I, p.225ff. (referred to subsequently as 'Drama').

9. Wolff, Jahre, pp.104f.

Alberti, Natur, pp.58f.

10. Praschek, Kunsttheorie, pp.6ff.

11. Alberti, Natur, pp.241f.; see also pp.235ff. See also: H. Conradi: Gesammelte Schriften, ed. P. Ssymank and G. Peters, Munich and Leipzig, 1911, Vol. II, pp.14f. and 338f.

12. Here the powerful influence of Zola is particularly apparent. His whole theory of an 'experimental' literature was determined by a wholehearted, unremitting engagement with the novel, both as a practising novelist and as a critic. It was really only in this capacious framework that it was possible to conceive that exhaustive revelation of interacting causes that he saw as the real goal of the new "scientific" literature which was coming into being.

See E. Zola: Le Roman experimental, Paris, 1923, pp.1ff. Although he claimed that in principle this analytical completeness could be realised in the drama, he also seems at times to have felt that the norms of illusion and verification which governed his thinking were derived from the novel and were really only valid within this context. It is noticeable, for instance, that his condemnation of contemporary plays is repeatedly expressed in terms of pejorative comparisons with successful novels and that he is constantly driven to see the tendency of the drama to select and compress as a concession to the conditions of stage-presentation. See e.g. Nos auteurs dramatiques, Paris, 1881, pp.73ff. Note Brahm's perceptive comments on this, Kritiken, p.258.

13. This is most revealingly exemplified in Brahm's opening article in the first number of Freie Bühne; reprinted in Kritiken, pp.317ff.

14. L. Berg: Henrik Ibsen und das Germanentum in der Literatur, Berlin, 1887, pp.23f. and 29f. (referred to subsequently as 'Ibsen').

See also Brahm's two essays on 'Ghosts', Kritiken, pp.141ff. and 172ff.; P. Schlenther in: Freie Bühne, 1890, p.921.

15. In an essay entitled 'Die beiden Grundformen des Dramas' Berg conducted one of the sharpest and most far-seeing enquiries into Ibsen's art written in these years. It is a pity that it has been largely neglected by scholars of Naturalism.

L. Berg: Neue Essays, Oldenburg and Leipzig, 1901. See esp. pp.137ff. (referred to subsequently as 'Essays').

P. Schlenther in: Neue Rundschau, 1895, pp.80f. Cf. his Introduction to 'An Enemy of the People' in H. Ibsen: Sämtliche Werke, Berlin, 1898ff., Vol. VII, p.xxi. (referred to subsequently as 'Ibsens Werke').

O. Brahm: Henrik Ibsen, Berlin, 1887, reveals most clearly the wide variety of concerns which drew the Naturalists to the intense study of the Norwegian. See esp. pp.61-70. (referred to subsequently as 'Ibsen'). See also Steiger, Drama, I., pp.112 and 142.

16. Brahm, Ibsen, pp.35 and 39.

Steiger, Kampf, pp.11; 107ff.;

Drama, I., pp.112f.

W. Bölsche in: Freie Bühne, 1893, p.590.

17. J. Brand in: Die Gesellschaft, 1888, p.1132.

P. Schlenther in: Freie Bühne, 1890, p.921.

Steiger, Drama, I., pp.156ff.

Brahm, Kritiken, pp.148; 176f.

18. E. Kühnemann: Henrik Ibsens Geistesentwicklung und seine Kunst, in: Die Gesellschaft, 1888, pp.882ff.; 893ff. (referred to subsequently as 'Ibsen').

Brahm, Kritiken, pp.148; 194ff. and pp.279f.

Wolff, Geschichte, pp.118ff.

Steiger, Drama, I., pp.126; 134; II., 263; 270. See also his comment on Ibsen's later social plays: "Hier ist das innere Leben der Menschen so überreich, dass für das äussere Geschehen fast kein Raum übrig bleibt." (p.267).

19. L. Marholm in: Freie Bühne, 1892, p.107.

Schlenther, Ibsens Werke, III, p.xxi.

Steiger, Drama, I., pp.264f.

20. Kühnemann, Ibsen, p.893.

Brahm, Kritiken, pp.149f.; 215f.; 266f.

Steiger, Drama, I., p.264.

21. Steiger, Drama, I, pp.204-248.

A. von Hanstein: Ibsen als Idealist, Leipzig, 1897, pp.192f. (referred to subsequently as 'Ibsen').

22. Kühnemann, Ibsen, p.895.

23. A. Miller: Introduction to Collected Plays, 1957, p.21f.

24. O. Brahm: Kritische Schriften, ed. P. Schlenther, Berlin, 1913, I., p.345. (referred to subsequently as 'Schriften').

Steiger, Drama, I, pp.227f.; 236ff.

25. Berg, Ibsen, pp.23; 29; 33; Essays, p.142.

Kühnemann, Ibsen, pp.889; 896; 899.

Brahm, Ibsen, p.51; Kritiken, pp.176f.; 197f.; 219f.

P. Schlenther in: Freie Bühne, 1890, p.921.

A. Kerr: Das neue Drama, 3rd ed., Berlin, 1909, p.205. (referred to subsequently as 'Drama').

E. Steiger, Drama, I., pp.286f.

26. Brahm, Schriften, I., p.130.

27. Steiger, Drama, I., pp.296ff. gives one of the fullest and most perceptive analyses of this method which he sees as fusing surface realism with psychological subtlety and tense dramatic life.

28. Schlenther, Ibsens Werke, VII, pp.xviiff.

J. Brand in: Die Gesellschaft, 1888, pp.1130ff.
See also E. Steiger's revealing discussion of Ibsen's power to reveal wide social contradictions in the consciousness of the unique individual, Drama, I., pp.156f.

29. Discussions of German Naturalism have not tended to emphasise the extent to which the radically positivistic dramatic theories of Zola were isolated from the main-stream of general Naturalist pre-occupations. They were not only very limited in their influence, they were also consciously and consistently opposed. E. Steiger's forceful rejection of Zola's dramaturgical ideas, Drama, I., pp.228ff., is typical of much Naturalist criticism, just as his statements on the essential

character of the dramatic would have found wide general acceptance among his associates (pp.79f.; 89; 94).

See also Alberti, Natur, pp.236f.

E. von Wolzogen in: Freie Bühne, 1890, p.1244.

L. Marholm in: Freie Bühne, 1892, p.774.

Brahm, Kritiken, p.258.

P. Schlenther in: Freie Bühne, 1890, p.15; 1896, p.302.

A. Kerr, Drama, pp.307f.

30. Brahm, Kritiken, pp.203ff.; 305ff.; 332ff.

E. von Wolzogen in: Freie Bühne, 1890, p.1249.

E. Brausewetter in: Die Gesellschaft, 1891, p.389.

Wolff, Geschichte, p.80.

M. Harden in: Die Zukunft, 1894, VI., p.280.

The resistance of the Freie Bühne to the work of Holz and Schlaf is clearly revealed in the fact that 'Die Familie Selicke' was the only play it produced which was subjected to severe criticism in its own organ.

31. L. Berg in: Die Gesellschaft, 1887, p.659.

J. Brand in: Die Gesellschaft, 1888, p.1132.

Kühnemann, Ibsen, pp.896ff.

Brahm, Kritiken, pp.194; 364; see also Freie Bühne, 1891, p.292.

Schlenther, Ibsens Werke, VIII, pp.ix, xiii; and especially his discussion of 'The Lady from the Sea', pp.xxiiiff.

Steiger, Drama, pp.180ff.

32. P. Schlenther in: Neue Rundschau, 1895, pp.80f.; see also Freie Bühne, 1893, p.1096.

33. Brahm, Kritiken, p.279.

34. Brahm, Kritiken, p.198.

35. C. Dickens: Little Dorrit, London, 1962, Book I., Ch. 8, p.89.

36. Kühnemann, Ibsen, pp.889ff. See also Brahm's discussion of 'Rosmersholm' and 'Ghosts', Kritiken, p.197ff. and 145ff.

37. See D. Krook: The Ordeal of Consciousness in the Work of Henry James, London, 1962, p.16.

38. F. Mauthner in: Magazin für Literatur, 1891, p.111.

Brahm, Kritiken, pp.194 and 364; Ibsen, p.127.

L. Berg: Zwischen zwei Jahrhunderten, Frankfurt/M., 1896, pp.259ff.

Wolff, Geschichte, p.120.

von Hanstein, Ibsen, pp.96f.

See also D.E.R. George: Henrik Ibsen in Deutschland, Göttingen, 1968, pp.28-43 (referred to subsequently as 'Ibsen').

39. George, Ibsen, pp.16ff.

40. G. Brandes: Moderne Geister, Frankfurt/M., 1887, pp.450ff. (referred to subsequently as 'Geister').

Brahm, Kritiken, pp.194f.

Steiger, Kampf, p.107.

M. Harden in: Die Gegenwart, 1889, pp.192ff.

Schlenther, Ibsens Werke, VI, pp.xviif.

B. Litzmann: Ibsens Dramen, [illegible], Hamburg and Leipzig, 1901, pp.9 and 20.

41. George, Ibsen, pp.29ff.

42. Brandes, Geister, pp.414ff.

43. G. Flaischlen in: Freie Bühne, 1892, p.646.

H. Gartelmann: Dramatik, Berlin, 1892, pp.56; 63f. Cf. 26f. (referred to subsequently as 'Dramatik').

Steiger, Drama, I., p.260.

Kerr, Drama, pp.302f.

44. Brahm, Schriften, I., p.118.

45. Brahm, Kritiken, pp.111ff. See also his important discussion of Grillparzer's 'Die Jüdin von Toledo' (pp.250ff.) which he compares with an Ibsen drama in its peculiarly modern drive to penetrate to "den geheimen leisen Regungen der Menschenbrust."

46. P. Schlenther in: Vossische Zeitung, 29th August, 1888 (morning edition). See also his article in the same paper on 1st December, 1893 (morning edition).

47. P. Schlenther in: Freie Bühne, 1892, pp.174f.

48. Kerr, Drama, pp.302f.

49. Gartelmann, Dramatik, pp.17ff.; 63f.; 89.

Kerr, Drama, p.303.

50. P. Schlenther: Gerhart Hauptmann, 3rd ed., Berlin, 1898, pp.132f. (referred to subsequently as 'Hauptmann').

M. Harden in: Die Zukunft, 1892, II, pp.164f.

51. G. Hauptmann: Sämtliche Werke, ed. H.E. Hass, Frankfurt/M., & Berlin, 1962ff., Vol I, p.101. See also G. Hauptmann: Die Kunst des Dramas, ed. M. Machatzke, Berlin, 1963, pp.181f.; 188.

52. See K. Ziegler's discussion of spiritual action in Schiller's plays: 'Schiller und das Drama', in: Wirkendes Wort, 1954/5, pp.207ff. See also his very illuminating article 'Zur Raum- und Bühnengestaltung des klassischen Dramentypus', in: Wirkendes Wort, 1954, pp.45-54.

53. H. Ibsen: 'The Master Builder' and other Plays. Trans. U. Ellis-Fermor, London, 1964, p.117.

54. K. Frenzel in: Deutsche Rundschau, 1887, pp.464f.

F. Spielhagen: Beiträge zur Theorie und Technik des Romans, Leipzig, 1883, pp.295-314.

55. Freytag, Werke, II, pp.352ff.

F. Th. Vischer: Ästhetik, ed. R. Vischer, 2nd ed., Stuttgart, 1923, Vol V., pp.303f.; 309; 322.

56. O. Ludwig: Shakespeare-Studien in: Werke, ed. A. Bartels, Leipzig, 1900, Vol. VI, p.208.

57. See below pp.310ff.

58. F. Martini: Introduction to Brahm, Kritiken, pp.62f.

59. Even the enthusiasm of Brahm's reviews of 'Das Friedensfest' and 'Einsame Menschen' (Kritiken, pp.322ff. and pp.375ff.) was tempered by misgivings about Hauptmann's concern to record minute details of character and milieu. See O. Koplowitz: Otto Brahm als Theaterkritiker, 1936, pp.71ff. Cf. also P. Schlenther in: Freie Bühne, 1890, pp.301f.

M. Harden in: Die Zukunft, VI, 1894, p.280.

H. Hart: Gesammelte Werke, Berlin, 1907, Vol. IV., p.332.

E. Zabel in: Nationalzeitung, 28th February, 1893.

Wolff, Geschichte, pp.85ff.

Kerr, Drama, pp.307f.

J. Bab: Wege zum Drama, Berlin, 1906, pp.12f.

This is a subject which has not yet been adequately investigated by scholars. But some characteristic differences of opinion are revealed in two useful reviews: P. Brandt: Das deutsche Drama am Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts im Spiegel der Kritik, Diss. Leipzig, 1932. See especially pp.19ff. and 35ff.; and S. Fischer: Die Aufnahme des naturalistischen Theaters in der deutschen Zeitschriftenpresse, Diss., F. U. Berlin, 1953, pp.105ff. and 165ff.

60. A typical example of this tendency is Schlenther, Hauptmann, pp.125ff.; 148ff.;

See also A. Kerr's review of 'Rose Bernd', Drama, pp.67ff.

This tension of critical attitudes is perhaps most clearly revealed in Brahm's review of 'Kollege Crampton' in:Kritiken, p.435-440. See also pp.375ff, In the second volume of Steiger's 'Das Werden des neuen dramas', on the other hand, there is a sensitive attempt to distinguish what he sees as Hauptmann's impressionistic art from that of Ibsen. See especially pp.37ff; 74ff. and 122. Only in 'Vor Sonnenaufgang' did he see a violation of the formal exigencies of the drama (pp.56f). Steiger was also one of the few Naturalists to defend 'Florian Geyer' enthusiastically. (pp.163ff.).

61. Brahm, Kritiken, p.60.

## (2) Poverty and Experience in Naturalist Drama

1. Osborne, Drama, pp.56ff., has discussed this in detail. See also Cowen, Naturalismus, pp.11ff.

2. See R. Hamann and J. Hermand: Naturalismus. Epochen deutscher Kultur von 1870 bis zur Gegenwart, Vol. II, 2nd ed., Berlin, 1969, pp.192ff. See also Osborne, Drama, pp.57ff.

3. The significance of this law which prohibited the newly formed socialist party to engage in political propaganda, has been informatively discussed by R. Pascal: From Naturalism to Expressionism: German Literature and Society, 1890-1918, London, 1973, pp.5ff.

4. H. & J. Hart, Waffengänge, VI, (1884), pp.47ff.

5. See Root, Zola, pp.30ff.; Cowen, Naturalismus, pp.50ff.

6. C. Alberti: Die zwölf Artikel des Realismus, in: Die Gesellschaft, 1889, pp.2-11.

7. Osborne, Drama, p.67.

8. W. Weigand: Das Elend der Kritik, Munich, 1895, p.120.

   The most interesting recent discussion of this question is that by B. Markwardt, Poetik, V, pp.118ff.

9. These and other similar dramas have been discussed by C. Kniffler: Die sozialen Dramen der achtziger und neunziger Jahre, Diss. Frankfurt, 1929. See esp. pp.17ff., 27ff. A broader survey is given by B. Manns: Das Proletariat und die Arbeiterfrage im deutschen Drama, Diss. Rostock, 1913. See esp. pp.60ff. Also of particular interest is his discussion of the stereotype of what he calls the "arbeiterfreundliche Bourgeois" in the plays of Fulda, Wilbrandt and Wildenbruch, pp.87ff.

10. These plays will be discussed in the next chapter. See below pp.219ff.

11. H. Sudermann: Die Ehre, 26th ed., Stuttgart, 1901, pp.10f.

12. Cowen, Naturalismus, pp.168f., rightly points out, however, that the dramatist's polemic concern to present his figures as victims of their environment often overrides his quest for psychological realism: at times they are made to analyse those circumstances to which they are supposed to be totally subject.

13. G. Hauptmann: Vor Sonnenaufgang, Werke, I, pp.61 and 127.

14. 'Vor Sonnenaufgang', pp.22f., 26ff., 41ff., 49f., 68f., 83ff.

15. This aspect of the play has been perceptively discussed by Osborne, Drama, p.78f.

16. Any suggestion that Helene is using Loth as a means of escape from a life which disgusts her or as a means of realising the ideal of a good life inculcated at a Herrnhut boarding-school is in my view completely destroyed by the sheer passionate intensity of the love scene in Act IV (pp.75ff.) Here it is quite clear that in her love for Loth she has undergone an experience of self-liberation and renewal and that she can no longer conceive of life without it. Contemporary critics were understandably taken aback by the emotional force of this scene and perplexed by a sense of its incongruity with the rest of the dramatic action. See e.g. A. Bartels:Gerhart Hauptmann, 2nd ed., Berlin, 1906, pp.39f.

17. Osborne, Drama, pp.51f.

18. See W. Kayser: Zur Dramaturgie des naturalistischen Schauspiels, in: Die Vortragsreise, Bern, 1958, pp.218ff. (referred to subsequently as 'Dramaturgie').

19. A. Holz: Das Werk, ed. Hans W. Fischer, Berlin, 1924f., Vol X, pp.213 and 227f. (referred to subsequently as 'Werke').

20. Holz, Werke, X, p.224f.

21. Holz, Werke, X, p.215.

22. Holz, Werke, X, p.254.

23. A. Holz and J. Schlaf: Die Familie Selicke, 4th ed. Berlin, 1892, pp.26ff. and 57ff.

24. Kayser, Dramaturgie, pp.224ff.; Osborne, Drama, pp.53f.

25. The question has been suggestively discussed by David Turner in his perceptive analysis of the play: 'Die Familie Selicke' and the Drama of Naturalism, in: Periods in German Literature, Texts and Contexts, II, ed. J. M. Ritchie, London, 1969, pp.193-219. See especially 197f.

26. Osborne, p.53, sees Toni as "a prisoner of circumstance" who simply cannot conceive of leaving her parents. Her renunciation is not, as he sees it, a conscious decision at all, but in Lionel Trilling's words, a deed "performed without thought, without choice, perhaps even without love". There is, however, as far as I can see, no clear evidence for this view, nor indeed for the contrary view of her decision which is put forward by Wendt in the play itself.

27. H. Schwab-Felisch in his edition of 'Die Weber', Frankfurt/M., 1963, pp.177-224, has reprinted a full and representative selection of contemporary discussions of the play. (Referred to subsequently as 'Die Weber').

28. Schwab-Felisch, Die Weber, pp.229f.

29. G. Hauptman: 'Die Weber', Werke, I, p.339.

30. 'Die Weber', pp.345, 369, 397, 431.

31. See M. Sinden: Gerhart Hauptmann. The prose Plays, Toronto& London, 1957, pp.70f. (referred to subsequently as 'Hauptmann').

32. 'Die Weber', pp.341, 343 and 431.

33. 'Die Weber', p.347. The involuntary horror of Dreissiger is revealed in a stage-direction when he realises that a child has fainted with hunger - confirming, as it were, Backer's accusation that he has been paying them starvation wages. (p.341).

34. See Sinden, Hauptmann, pp.64f.

35. There is, I think, a fundamental similarity between this experience of the weavers and the epochal awareness of disinheritance which informs the conception of so many Naturalist dramas. This is something which will be discussed in the next two chapters, pp.219ff.

36. See K. S. Guthke: Gerhart Hauptmann.

Weltbild im Werk, Göttingen, 1961, pp.75ff. (referred to subsequently as 'Hauptmann').

See also U. Münchow: Deutscher Naturalismus, Berlin, 1968, pp.101f. (referred to subsequently as 'Naturalismus').

37. E. Zola: Le Roman Experimental, Paris, 1923. See esp. pp.1ff.; 43ff.; 118ff.

## (3) Elegies of Dispossession: Max Halbe and Naturalist Drama

1. See, for instance, M. Dreyer: 'Drei', 3rd ed., Stuttgart, 1905, pp.13f.

   A. Schnitzler: 'Das Märchen' in: Gesammelte Werke, Berlin, 1922f., Abteilung 2, Vol. I, p.137 (referred to subsequently as 'Werke').

   Max Halbe: 'Mutter Erde' in: Gesammelte Werke, Munich, 1917-23, Vol. II, p.59; 'Die Heimatlosen', Vol. II, pp.201 and 213; see also 'Eisgang', Vol. III, p.41 (referred to subsequently as 'Werke').

2. Osborne, Drama, p.60, has attempted to relate this tendency of the Naturalists to recoil from the realities of city life to basic conservative, provincial impulses in their general outlook. See also pp.29f.

3. J. Northam: Ibsen's Search for the Hero, in: Ibsen. A Collection of critical Essays, New York, 1965, pp.91-108, perceptively analyses the force and ambiguity of Ibsen's obsession with the life of society. He sees it, Northam, argues, not just as a "source of definable, limitable and often remediable misery", but "as a force working through a myriad of obscure agencies and occasions," working "with a power and a mystery comparable to that displayed by the Greek gods or the Elizabethan universe."

   See also M. Swales: Arthur Schnitzler, Oxford, 1971, p.181. His comments on Schnitzler's preoccupations seem to me applicable to most Naturalist plays: "In a play like 'The Pillars of the Community' Ibsen attacks the way society is run, the powers of social administration and with these specific, concrete forms of social abuse. Schnitzler attacks above all prevailing social attitudes; he is concerned with the way people confront and formulate personal <u>private</u> experience, rather than with social activities as such."

4. See, for instance, Münchow, Naturalismus, pp.122f. See also below pp.226ff. An increasing limitation of social interest is also particularly apparent in H. Sudermann's 'Heimat', 39th ed. Stuttgart, 1909. See esp. pp.158ff.

5. Osborne, Drama, p.67, stresses what he sees as the general tendency of the Naturalists "to make general problems, like the inhibiting effect of middle-class upbringing on progressive ideas, or the rights of the individual within a programme of socialization, into special cases in which the hero is (or is said to be) a more than ordinary man who merits extraordinary consideration."

6. One could not get the impression from any of these plays that the social position of the army and of militaristic policy in general, was a matter of urgent dispute in the 1890's. See Hamann & Hermand, Naturalismus, pp.197ff.

7. A. Holz's comedy 'Sozialaristokraten', Berlin, 1896, is exceptional in that it makes clear, if inexplicit, reference to a specific party-political situation. But even here the real preoccupation is with personal frailties and temptations, which have no wider political significance. In the end the scope of work is as restricted as that of Freytag's 'Die Journalisten' with which it has some obvious thematic similarities. See Osborne, Drama, pp.65f.

R. Williams; Modern Tragedy, London, 1966, p.95, speaks of the concerted tendency in Ibsen's mature plays to define "a false society as man's real enemy"; to name "in social terms...the formerly nameless alienation." Although it is clearly possible to argue about the exact character and extent of this impulse and about its function in the conception of individual plays (Williams seems to me in many ways to over-simplify this aspect of the dramatist's work), there can be no doubt that it does represent a fundamental element of Ibsen's creative inspiration - and one that is not so fully developed in most Naturalist dramas.

8. O. E. Hartleben; 'Hanna Jagert' in: Ausgewählte Werke, Berlin, 1909, Vol. III, pp.113ff. (referred to subsequently as 'Werke').

H. Sudermann; 'Das Glück im Winkel', 4th ed., Stuttgart, 1896, p.126.

G. Hirschfeld; 'Die Mütter,' 3rd ed., Berlin, 1900, pp.140ff.

9. J. Schlaf; 'Gertrud', Berlin, 1898, pp.102ff.

C. Flaischlen; 'Martin Lehnhardt', Berlin, 1895, pp.73f.

10. 'Das Glück im Winkel', p.28;

'Martin Lehnhardt', pp.26 and 31.

11. 'Das Glück im Winkel', pp.53ff. and 73

12. Schnitzler, by contrast, in plays like 'Das Märchen', 'Das Vermächtnis' and 'Freiwild', is generally completely convincing in his more limited and sceptical concern to diagnose the hollowness of the enlightened individual's pretensions to freedom. The hero in these three works, despite his belief in the autonomy of his own judgement, is shown to be the victim of prejudices which he claims to have outgrown. See especially A. Schnitzler; Das Märchen, Werke, 1, pp.202f.; 'Das Vermächtnis', Werke, 1, pp.437ff.; 'Freiwild', Werke, 1, pp. 342ff. Sympathy here, as also in 'Liebelei' is almost exclusively directed towards the female figures who must bear the consequences of this failure of the male characters to understand themselves and the world in which they live. There are some interesting comments on this in: B. Blume; Das nihilistische Weltbild Arthur Schnitzlers, Stuttgart, 1936, pp.62f.

13. In Carl Hauptmann's 'Marianne', Berlin, 1894, the revolt of the heroine is shown by contrast to stem from the fact that she has become aware of the irrational energies which direct her life beneath the level of consciousness (pp.95f.). She gains access in Rosa's words to "der wilde unbändige Lebensdrang, vor dem ich uns sicher wähnte." (p.86; see also p.59).

14. This concern is also apparent in other plays of the time, such as for instance M. Dreyer's 'Winterschlaf', Berlin, 1896. Here, however, the experience of the heroine is altogether too slight and insignificant to sustain the structure of symbolic suggestion finally imposed upon it (p.128). Her death seems to stem unambiguously from weaknesses in her own individual make-up rather than from a great moral-cultural crisis as the symbolism would seem to imply.

15. H. Sudermann; Sodoms Ende, 22nd ed., Stuttgart, 1901, pp.36f.; pp.88ff.

16. O. E. Hartleben: 'Rosenmontag', Werke, III, pp.226 and 240f.

17. Dosenheimer, Drama, p.182.

18. There have been few comprehensive attempts to explore the relations between Halbe's work and the development of Naturalism. Recent accounts of the Naturalist movement like those of Münchow and Osborne have shown little interest in Halbe, while even the best of specialist studies of his drama, like H. Weder: Die Stimmungskunst in Max Halbes Gegenwartsdramen, Diss. Halle, 1932, have tended to see his plays as essentially separate from Naturalist drama.

    Only S. Hoefert; The Work of Max Halbe with Special Reference to Naturalism, Diss., Toronto, 1962, has made a serious effort to fill this gap.

19. 'Die Heimatlosen', 'Freie Liebe', 'Jugend', 'Mutter Erde' are contained in Halbe, Werke, Vol. II; 'Eisgang', 'Haus Rosenhagen' and 'Der Strom' are in Vol. III. See esp. 'Die Heimatlosen', p.208.

20. 'Eisgang', p.30.

    'Haus Rosenhagen', pp.193; 224f.

    'Freie Liebe', pp.93f.; 116.

    'Die Heimatlosen', pp.211; 237.

    'Mutter Erde', pp.303; 321f.

21. 'Mutter Erde', pp.372ff.; 382ff.

    'Die Heimatlosen', pp.226ff.; 242ff.

22. 'Mutter Erde', pp.316ff.; see also pp.378f.

'Die Heimatlosen', pp.257ff.; see also pp.277.

23. The hero's consciousness of social influences is shown to be equally defective in 'Jugend', see below pp.276f. See also 'Freie Liebe', pp.78f.; 93. Winter's belief that emigration to the New World will grant him spiritual renewal, reveals most clearly this basic tendency to self-deception (p.104).

24. P. Fechter: Das europäische Drama, Vol. II, Mannheim, 1957, pp.96ff.

25. See M. Halbe; Berliner Brief, in: Die Gesellschaft, 1889, pp.1171-1186.

26. This is especially noticeable in those plays which have an urban setting, like 'Die Heimatlosen' and 'Freie Liebe'. It is of most immediate dramatic significance in 'Jugend'. See below pp.278ff.

27. 'Eisgang', pp.16, 24, 58.

28. The essentially unchanging character of man's exposure to natural forces is emphasised in both these plays by reference to chronicles or legendary accounts of ancient disasters. See 'Eisgang', p.66; 'Der Strom', pp.281f.

29. 'Mutter Erde', pp.319ff.; 'Haus Rosenhagen' pp.229f.

30. 'Haus Rosenhagen', pp.224f.

'Mutter Erde', p.364.

31. 'Haus Rosenhagen', pp.229f. 232, 259ff.

This impression of Hermine's destructive powers is underlined by Martha's view of the character. See pp.196 and 258.

32. 'Mutter Erde', pp.302f.; 342ff.; 369.

33. Already in 'Freie Liebe', however, Halbe is concerned to show that the experience of city life is still intimately bound up with the awareness of seasonal development. See pp.28; 32f.; 52ff.; 72f. and 102. In this context the heavy snow storm which brings Berlin to a standstill acquires an almost symbolic significance (pp.40 and 44.).

34. 'Die Heimatlosen', p.204; 231; p.277.

35. 'Die Heimatlosen', pp.226ff.; see also 239f.

36. 'Die Heimatlosen', p.226; 242f.; 254.

37. 'Eisgang', p.66; see also p.64.

'Der Strom', pp.281f. and 327f.

38. 'Haus Rosenhagen', pp.255f. and 270.

39. 'Mutter Erde', pp.377ff.; see also p.389.

40. 'Jugend', pp.164ff.

41. 'Jugend', pp.130f. and 176.

42. 'Jugend', pp.145ff.; 161ff.

43. 'Jugend', pp.131; 151f.; 169; 178f.

44. Gregor's forgetting of the book he needs for teaching and his return to the house are seen as a 'Freudian' slip; unconsciously he is driven to find a pretext which will allow him to check up on Annchen (p.178).

45. Amandus instinctively sees Gregor as an ally in his battle against Hans. He senses that if he tells Gregor of his sister's visit to Hans' room, the priest will take action against him (pp.179f.; see also p.151).

46. The catastrophe in 'Jugend' was singled out by Bölsche, along with that in 'Vor Sonnenaufgang' and 'Die Weber', as symptomatic of a basic artistic confusion inherent in the conception of many Naturalist dramas. W. Bölsche: Hinter der Weltstadt, Jena & Leipzig, 1905, pp.112f.

## (4) Hauptmann's domestic Tragedies

1. Osborne, Drama, see esp. pp.viii, 98f.; 143ff.; 165f.

2. M. Freyhan: Gerhart Hauptmann, Berlin, 1922, pp.13ff. 48f., 76ff.

   E. Langner: Die Religion Gerhart Hauptmanns, Tübingen, 1928. See esp. pp.8ff.; 18ff.

3. W. Emrich: Der Tragödientypus Gerhart Hauptmanns, in: Protest und Verheissung, Frankfurt/M., 1960, pp.193-205 (referred to subsequently as 'Tragödientypus').

   Guthke, Hauptmann, pp.58ff.

   N. E. Alexander: Studien zum Stilwandel im dramatischen Werk Gerhart Hauptmanns, Stuttgart, 1964, pp.10ff.; 130ff. (referred to subsequently as 'Studien').

   H.-J. Schrimpf: Struktur und Metaphysik des sozialen Schauspiels bei Gerhart Hauptmann, in: Literatur und Gesellschaft vom 19ten ins 20ste Jahrhundert. Festgabe für Benno von Wiese, Bonn, 1963, pp.274-308 (referred to subsequently as 'Struktur').

4. I do not deny that there are considerable differences between these domestic plays from 'Einsame Menschen' to 'Die Ratten'. But it seems to me that the conception of all of them is determined by a fundamental acknowledgement of the actual, contingent world as the sphere in which man's life is inescapably played out. The only partial exception to this (as I hope to show) is 'Das Friedensfest' in which the dramatic world is strangely detached from the sphere of contingent social-historical pressures. It is not surprising that Emrich, Alexander and others have concentrated so much on this play in their attempts to stress the continuity in Hauptmann's work.

5. In his discussion of 'Die Weber' Guthke, Hauptmann, pp.75f., asserts for instance that the spiritual vision of Hilse extends the limitations of the dramatic world by revealing a religious dimension which necessarily places the socially determined action in a new perspective. Hilse's experience of the supernatural, however, (as has already been suggested, pp.212ff.) is essentially ambiguous and lacks all such transforming power. We can never be certain that this sacrificial faith does not arise out of an unconscious need to escape the reality of earthly hardship and failure. It is dramatically presented, in other words, in a way which makes its relation to the actual development of the dramatic action consistently questionable.

   Emrich, Tragödientypus, p.195, similarly, attaches great

importance to the fact that Robert Scholz in 'Das Friedensfest' expresses a condemnation of God which is similar to that expressed in many of Hauptmann's later plays and especially in his 'Atriden' tetralogy:

> "Gott als Schöpfer dieser Welt wird als mitschuldig erklärt an den Schuldverkettungen, dem ewigen Streit seiner Schöpfung."

As far as I can see, however, it is impossible to attach such a significance to Robert's exclamation in its specific dramatic context. His words are presented as arising out of a neurotic condition the causes of which are known to the spectator. They are presented, that is, diagnostically and ironically, as a means of defining the nature of an inner disorder. It is very doubtful if they tell us much about the real existential experience of the Scholzes, or anything indisputable about the world in which they live.

6. P. Böckmann: Der Naturalismus Gerhart Hauptmanns, in: Gestaltprobleme der Dichtkunst. Günther Müller Festschrift, Bonn, 1957, pp.239-258, has explored the dramatic possibilities of Hauptmann's language with great sensitivity.

   See also Schrimpf, Struktur, pp.269f.

7. Emrich, Tragödientypus, pp.196ff.

8. Schrimpf, Struktur, pp.299f. See also his 'Rose Bernd' in: Das deutsche Drama, ed. B. von Wiese, Wiesbaden, 1958, II, p.178. Schrimpf argues that the real causes of the catastrophe are to be sought in some incomprehensible fate which is separate from the social but which is at work in and through it: "Die soziale Wirklichkeit, Herkunft, Milieu, äussere Verhältnisse sind dabei nur das Medium, durch das dieses Schicksal es-haft hindurchwandelt...und in dem es sich verwirklicht."

   But as far as I can see the impression of this dense, meticulously detailed world, which seems so close to the random world of our actual experience, simply does not allow of such clear discriminations. It is challenging precisely in its imperviousness to our desire to impose order upon it.

9. 'Das Friedensfest', 'Einsame Menschen', 'Fuhrmann Henschel' and 'Michael Kramer' are contained in Hauptmann, Werke, Vol. I;

   'Rose Bernd', 'Gabriel Schillings Flucht' and 'Die Ratten' are in Vol. II.

10. When Wilhelm sees his father approaching, he is overcome by a violent conflict of feeling. But something drives him on to face his father:

"Wilhelm scheint einen Seelenkampf physisch durchzuringen. Er will reden, die Kehle scheint ihm zu versagen, es kommt nur zu lautlosen Bewegungen der Lippen. Er nimmt die Hand von der Stuhllehne und schreitet auf den Alten zu. Er geht unsicher, er taumelt, er kommt ins Wanken, steht, will aufs neue reden, vermag es aber nicht, schleppt sich weiter und bricht, die Hände gefaltet, zu des Alten Füssen nieder. In des Doktors Gesicht hat der Ausdruck gewechselt: Hass, Staunen, erwachendes Mitgefühl, Bestürzung." (p.134).

Emrich, Tragödientypus, p.197, has given a most incisive analysis of this development in the action. See also Guthke, Hauptmann, p.67.

11. For Wilhelm the very sight of his old home is enough to awaken a sense of the violent fears and hatreds which destroy his search for self-possession; it renews profound, half-buried feelings of remorse (pp.124f.); Dr. Scholz retains a deep terror of this place where he was isolated and finally assaulted (p.148); Robert claims to have seen through and rejected the hypocrisy of family feelings yet returns home regularly at this most emotional of times (pp.121; 159).

12. The significance of this incident has not generally been fully understood by commentators. Osborne, Drama, p.100, claims that Robert rebuffs Ida because he finds it difficult to show emotion. But merely to accept a Christmas present would not seem to entail a great display of feeling, especially as he is irritated by the very conventionality of the whole proceedings - that is by the fact that little <u>real</u> emotion is involved. Guthke, Hauptmann, p.68, gives no reason why the feeling of reconciliation should break down, but claims nonetheless that this feeling is clearly not illusory.

Sinden, Hauptmann, pp.30ff., notes Robert's sexual jealousy, but does not relate this experience to that of family reconciliation.

13. Auguste, like her mother, seems to lack the emotional intensity of Dr. Scholz and his sons. It may be his sense of her similarity to her mother which makes Dr. Scholz take much less interest in her than in his sons. See esp. p.131.

14. In 'Michael Kramer' the pattern of the father's behaviour is basically identical. The fear of completely losing contact with his son drives him to make an immense effort to communicate with him. The very violence of this attempt contrives only further to alienate Arnold and to heighten his resistance to his father's entreaty. This eventually leads in turn to a fuller and more bitter withdrawal on the part of the older man.

See 'Michael Kramer' esp. pp.1139ff.; 1168ff.

15. Münchow, Naturalismus, p.93; Osborne, Drama , p.89.

16. Emrich, Tragödientypus, pp.197ff.; Alexander, Studien, pp.33ff.; Guthke, Hauptmann, pp. 64ff.

17. The play's motto emphasises the dramatist's own consciousness of this general relevance:

> "Ich lege dies Drama in die Hände derjenigen, die es gelebt haben." (p.168).

18. 'Einsame Menschen', pp.194ff.; 218ff.

19. Käthe most openly expresses her sense of loss in her conversation with Frau Vockerat in Act III:

> "Hab' ich ihn denn überhaupt jemals besessen? Erst haben ihn die Freunde gehabt, jetzt hat ihn Anna. Mit mir allein ist er nie zufrieden gewesen." (p.223).

What is most striking about this statement is the implied identification of Johannes' former relationship with his political associates with his present attachment to Anna. It lacks, in other words, any suggestion that this attachment is sexual.

On another occasion, however, she does confess that right at the beginning when Johannes proposed to her, she was struck by a strange disabling sense of her own inadequacy (p.256).

20. 'Fuhrmann Henschel', pp.889 and 893; see also pp.921 and 977.

21. At the beginning of his confession to Siebenhaar he confesses his complete culpability:

> "...ich bin ja an allen schuld; ich weess, dass ich schuld bin, nu gutt damit." (p.993).

At the end of the same speech he seems to deny any real responsibility for what has happened.

22. Streckmann claims that Rose was attracted to him (pp.193 and 197). After he has forced himself upon her, he claims that she submitted voluntarily (p.227). Her true feelings are clearly revealed, however, when she has to drink from the bottle he has just used. Here she is completely overcome by revulsion (p.200).

23. The change in Frau Flamm is most clearly revealed in her reply to her husband's request that she should continue to help Rose: "Ich kann ihr die Schuhe nich putzen, Flamm!" (p.240).

24. Rose's horror of existence is similar to that experienced by

Arnold Kramer. After his death his sister Michaline tries to explain to Lachmann why he carried a gun:

> "Er sah eben nichts als Feinde ringsum. Und liess sich das auch absolut nicht ausreden. Das ist alles nur Tünche, sagte er stets. Sie verstecken nur alle die Klauen und Pranken, und wenn du nicht achtgibst, bist du 'rum." (p.1166).

25. 'Die Ratten', see esp. pp.757; 765; 818; 827; at other times she is fully aware of the child's death. See e.g. p.818.

26. When Piperkarcka first appears, Frau John doesn't seem to know straight away who she is (p.767), and even after she has identified her, she does not seem to realise the girl's connection with the child (p.768). After this Frau John's attitude vacillates widely between attempts first to intimidate her and then to gain her favour.

27. This is perhaps most strongly emphasised in 'Michael Kramer'. Here Arnold's sister, Michaline, is actually present in the inn when he rushes out in terror to kill himself. It is only after he has gone and is out of reach that she senses the full seriousness of his condition (pp.1160 and 1165f.). Käthe, Keil and John similarly only sense the finality of what has happened after it is too late.

28. In 'Gabriel Schillings Flucht', the hero similarly finds himself increasingly bound to his mistress Hanne Elias without at the same time being able to break off his relationship with his wife. See esp. pp.435f.; 438; 462ff.

    Heinrich, the central figure in the verse-play 'Die versunkene Glocke', Werke, 1, is trapped in a similarly unresolvable emotional conflict. See esp. pp.800, 831, 836ff.; 851.

29. Even though Rose Bernd breaks off her relationship with Flamm, she makes it clear that her love for him is unchanging. She tries to explain to him in the harvest-field that she will go on loving him through his child. Flamm, however, does not understand the meaning of her shy, oblique confession. (pp.224ff.).

30. Schrimpf, Struktur, pp. 304f., has stressed the importance of the recurrent imagery of animal conflict in these plays. In this respect the experience of overwhelming existential exposure which these Hauptmann figures undergo, is very similar to that undergone by the hero in Halbe's plays.

31. With the exception of Keil Michael Kramer is the only figure to gain a clear understanding of the nature of his involvement. He comes to see after Arnold's death that by trying to force his son into conformity with his own notions of value, he has helped to destroy him (p.1171).

32. Two of the most radical and coherently argued of these positivistic studies are: E. Wulffen: Gerhart Hauptmann. Kriminalpsychologische und pathologische Studien, Berlin, 1911; see esp. pp.10f.; 155ff.; J. Röhr: Gerhart Hauptmanns dramatisches Schaffen, Berlin, 1912. See esp. pp.48f. and 282ff.

33. In 'Gabriel Schillings Flucht, the hero's mystical belief that he can find redemption through abandoning himself to the creative energy of the sea is endorsed by the experience of Lucie Heil, a figure who in other respects is not very close to him. Like Schilling she senses that nothing in the phenomenal world is final and she is aware of being united in spirit with her dead mother (p.441). After Schilling's death it is she who makes the choric pronouncement:

"jetzt ist er für ewig geborgen!" (p.475).

34. See e.g. Osborne, Drama, pp.143ff.

## Conclusion

1. Hettner, Drama, p.86.

# Bibliography

## Bibliographical

Cowen, Roy C., Neunzehntes Jahrhundert. Handbuch der deutschen Literatur-geschichte, zweite Abteilung, vol. 9, Bern and Munich, 1970.

Eppelsheimer, Hanns W., Bibliographie der deutschen Literaturwissenschaft, Frankfurt/M., 1957.

Guthke, Karl S., Das deutsche bürgerliche Trauerspiel, Stuttgart, 1972.

Hoefert, Sigfrid, Das Drama des Naturalismus, Stuttgart, 1968.

Kosch, Wilhelm, Deutsches Literatur-Lexikon,3rd ed., ed. B. Berger and H. Rupp, Bern, 1966.

## Primary

Alberti, Conrad, Brot!, Leipzig, 1888.

_____ Natur und Kunst, Leipzig, 1890.

_____ Die zwölf Artikel des Realismus, in: Die Gesellschaft, 1889, pp.2-11.

Anzengruber, Ludwig, Briefe, ed. A. Bettelheim, Stuttgart, 1902, 2 vols.

_____ Sämtliche Werke, ed. R. Latzke and A. Rommel, Vienna and Leipzig, 1920-2, 15 vols.

Auerbach, Berthold, Dramatische Eindrücke, Stuttgart, 1893.

_____ Gesammelte Schriften, Stuttgart and Augsburg, 1875-8, 20vols.

_____ Schrift und Volk, Leipzig, 1846.

Bab, Julius, Der Naturalismus, in: Das deutsche Drama, ed. R. F. Arnold, Munich, 1925.

_____ Wege zum Drama, Berlin, 1906.

Bahr, Hermann, Zur Überwindung des Naturalismus, ed. G. Wunberg, Stuttgart, 1968.

Bauernfeld, Eduard von, Gesammelte Aufsätze, ed. S. Hock, Vienna, 1905.

_____ Gesammelte Schriften, Vienna, 1871-3, 12 vols.

Bauernfeld, Eduard von, Zwei Familien, Vienna, 1840.

Berg, Leo, Henrik Ibsen und das Germanentum in der modernen Literatur, Berlin, 1887.

_____ Der Naturalismus, Munich, 1892.

_____ Neue Essays, Oldenburg and Leipzig, 1901.

_____ Der Übermensch in der modernen Literatur, Leipzig, 1897.

_____ Zwischen zwei Jahrhunderten, Frankfurt/M., 1896.

Birch-Pfeiffer, Charlotte, Gesammelte dramatische Werke, Leipzig, 1863-70.

Bleibtreu Karl, Dramatische Werke, Leipzig, 1889, 3 vols.

_____ Revolution der Literatur, Leipzig, 1886.

Blumenthal, Oskar, Theatralische Eindrücke, Berlin, 1885.

Bölsche, Wilhelm, Die naturwissenschaftlichen Grundlagen der Poesie, Leipzig, 1887.

_____ Hinter der Weltstadt, Leipzig, 1901.

Brahm, Otto, Henrik Ibsen, Berlin, 1887.

_____ Kritiken und Essays, ed. F. Martini, Zurich, 1964.

_____ Kritische Schriften über Drama und Theater, ed. P. Schlenther, Berlin, 1913, 2 vols.

Brandes, Georg, Moderne Geister, Frankfurt/M., 1887.

Bulthaupt, Heinrich, Dramaturgie des Schauspiels, 5th ed., Oldenburg, 1891-4.

_____ Dumas, Sardou und die jetzige Franzosenherrschaft auf der deutschen Bühne, Berlin, 1888.

Conrad, Michael Georg, Madam Lutetia! Leipzig, 1883.

_____ Von Zola bis Gerhart Hauptmann, Leipzig, 1902.

Conradi, Hermann, Gesammelte Schriften, ed. P. Ssymank and G. Peters, Munich, 1911, 3 vols.

Dickens, Charles, Little Dorrit, London, 1962.

Dreyer, Max, Drei, 3rd ed., Stuttgart and Leipzig, 1905.

_____ Der Probekandidat, 5th ed., Leipzig and Berlin, 1900.

_____ Winterschlaf, Berlin, 1896.

Flaischlen, Cäsar, Martin Lehnhardt, Berlin, 1895.

_____ Toni Stürmer, Berlin, 1897.

Frenzel, Karl, Büsten und Bilder, Hannover, 1864.

Freytag, Gustav, Gesammelte Werke, Berlin, n.d., 14 vols.

Fulda, Ludwig, Das verlorene Paradies, Stuttgart, 1892.

_____ Die Kamaraden, Stuttgart, 1895.

Gartelmann, Henri, Dramatik, Berlin, 1892.

Gottschal, Rudolf, Die deutsche Nationalliteratur des 19. Jahrhunderts, 6th ed., Breslau, 1891-2, 4 vols.

Grillparzer, Franz, Sämtliche Werke, ed. P. Frank and K. Pörnbacher, Munich, 1960-65, 4 vols.

Gutzkow, Karl, Dramatische Werke, 4te Gesamtausgabe, Jena, 1881, 4 vols.

_____ Gesammelte Werke, Frankfurt/M., 1845-52, 13 vols.

_____ Die Zeitgenossen, 2nd ed., Pforzheim, 1842, 2 vols.

Halbe, Max, Berliner Brief, in: Die Gesellschaft, 1889, pp.1171-1186.

_____ Gesammelte Werke, Munich, 1917-1923, 7 vols.

Hanstein, Adalbert von, Ibsen als Idealist, Leipzig, 1897.

_____ Das jüngste Deutschland, Leipzig, 1900.

Hart, Heinrich, Gesammelte Werke, ed. J. Hart, Berlin, 1907, 4 vols.

Hart, Heinrich and Julius, Kritische Waffengänge, Leipzig, 1882-4.

Hartleben, Otto Erich, Ausgewählte Werke, Berlin, 1909, 3 vols.

Hauptmann, Carl, Marianne, Berlin, 1894.

Hauptmann, Gerhart, Die Kunst des Dramas, ed. M. Machatzke, Frankfurt/M., and Berlin, 1963.

_____ Sämtliche Werke, ed. H.-E. Hass, Frankfurt/M. and Berlin, 1962-70, 10 vols.

_____ Die Weber, Dichtung und Wirklichkeit, ed. H. Schwab-Felisch, Frankfurt/M. and Berlin, 1963.

Hazlitt, William, The Spirit of the Age, London, 1942.

Hebbel, Friedrich, Maria Magdalena, ed. G. Brychan Rees, Oxford, 1944.

_____ Sämtliche Werke. Historisch-kritische Ausgabe, ed. R. M. Werner, Berlin, 1901-1903, 12 vols.

Henneberger, August, Das deutsche Drama der Gegenwart, Greifswald, 1853.

Hettner, Hermann, Das moderne Drama, Braunschweig, 1852.

Hirschfeld, Georg, Die Mütter, 3rd ed., Berlin, 1900.

_____ Pauline, Berlin, 1899.

Holz, Arno, Sozialaristokraten, Berlin, 1896.

_____ Das Werk, ed. H. W. Fischer, Berlin, 1924-5, 10 vols.

Holz and Schlaf, Johannes, Die Familie Selicke, 4th ed., Berlin, 1892.

_____ Neue Gleise, Berlin, 1892.

_____ Papa Hamlet, Leipzig, 1889.

Ibsen, Henrik, 'The Master Builder' and other Plays, transl. U. Ellis-Fermor, London, 1964.

_____ The Oxford Ibsen, ed. J. W. McFarlane, London, 1961-72. 7 vols.

_____ Sämtliche Werke in deutscher Sprache, ed. G. Brandes, J. Elias and P. Schlenther, Berlin, 1898-1905, 10 vols.

Kerr, Alfred, Das neue Drama, 3rd ed., Berlin, 1909.

_____ Die Welt im Drama, Berlin, 1917.

Kühne, Ferdinand, Portraits und Silhouetten, Hannover, 1843, 2 vols.

Kühnemann, Eugen, Henrik Ibsens Geistesentwicklung und seine Kunst, in: Die Gesellschaft, 1888, pp.725-741, 881-901.

Laube, Heinrich, Ausgewählte Werke, ed. H. H. Houben, Leipzig, n.d., 10 vols.

_____ Prinz Friedrich, Leipzig, 1845.

_____ Theaterkritiken und dramaturgische Aufsätze, ed. A. von Weilen, Berlin, 1906.

Lessing, Gotthold Ephraim, Werke. Vollständige Ausgabe, ed. J. Petersen and W. von Olshausen, Berlin, 1925-29, 25 vols.

Lindau, Paul, Dramaturgische Blätter, Stuttgart and Leipzig, 1874-5, 2 vols.

_____ Gesammelte Aufsätze, Berlin and Leipzig, 1875.

Litzmann, Berthold, Das deutsche Drama in den literarischen Bewegungen der Gegenwart, 3rd ed. Hamburg & Leipzig, 1896.

_____ Ibsens Dramen, 1877-1900, Hamburg, 1901.

Loewenthal, Erich and Schneider, Lambert, Sturm und Drang. Dramatische Schriften, Heidelberg, n.d., 2 vols.

Ludwig, Otto, Briefe 1834-1847, ed. K. Vogtherr, Weimar, 1935.

_____ Gesammelte Schriften, ed. A. Stern, Leipzig, 1891, 6 vols.

_____ Werke, ed. A. Bartels, Leipzig, 1900, 6 vols.

_____ Werke, ed. P. Merker, Munich, & Leipzig, 1912-14, 6 vols.

Marggraff, Herrmann, Deutschlands jüngste Literatur - und Culturepoche, Leipzig, 1839.

Marx, Karl, Das Kapital, 4th ed., ed. F. Engels, Hamburg, 1890-4, 3 vols.

Müller-Guttenbrunn, A., Im Jahrhundert Grillparzers, Vienna, 1893.

Münchow, Ursula ed., Naturalismus, 1885-1891; Dramen, Lyrik Prosa, Berlin, 1970.

Mundt, Theodor, Dramaturgie, Berlin, 1848.

_____ Geschichte der Literatur der Gegenwart, 2nd ed., Leipzig, 1853.

Nestroy, Johann, Sämtliche Werke, ed. F. Bruckner and O. Rommel, Vienna, 1924-1930, 15 vols.

Nietzsche, Friedrich, Werke und Briefe, Munich, 1933-42, 9 vols.

Prutz, Robert, Epos und Drama in der deutschen Literatur der Gegenwart, Leipzig, 1854, 2 vols.

_____ Neue Schriften, Halle, 1854, 2 vols.

_____ Vorlesungen über die Geschichte des deutschen Theaters, Berlin, 1847.

Raupach, Ernst, Dramatische Werke ernster Gattung, Hamburg, 1835-43, 16 vols.

Schlaf, Johannes, Die Feindlichen, Minden, 1899.

Schlaf, Johannes, Gertrud, Berlin, 1898.

_____ Meister Oelze, Berlin, 1892.

Schlegel, August W., Vorlesungen über die dramatische Kunst und Literatur, ed. E. Lohner, Heidelberg, 1967, 2 vols.

Schlenther, Paul, Gerhart Hauptmann, 3rd ed., Berlin, 1898.

_____ Wozu der Lärm? Genesis der Freien Bühne, Berlin, 1889.

Schmidt, Julian, Geschichte der deutschen Literatur seit Lessings Tod, 4th ed., Leipzig, 1858, 3 vols.

Schnitzler, Arthur, Gesammelte Werke, Berlin, 1922-23, 9 vols.

Spielhagen, Friedrich, Beiträge zur Theorie und Technik des Romans, Leipzig, 1883.

Stahr, Adolf, Kleine Schriften, Berlin, 1872, 2 vols.

Steiger, Edgar, Der Kampf um die neue Literatur, Leipzig, 1889.

_____ Das Werden des neuen Dramas, Berlin, 1898, 2 vols.

Sudermann, Hermann, Die Ehre, 26th ed., Stuttgart, 1901.

_____ Das Glück im Winkel, 4th ed., Stuttgart, 1896.

_____ Heimat, 39th ed. Stuttgart, 1909.

_____ Sodoms Ende, 22nd ed., Stuttgart, 1901.

Vischer, Friedrich Theodor, Ästhetik, ed. R. Vischer, 2nd ed., Stuttgart, 1923, 6 vols.

_____ Ausgewählte Werke, ed. G. Keyssner, Stuttgart, 1918, 3 vols.

Wedekind, Frank, Gesammelte Werke, ed. A. Kutscher and J. Friedenthal, Munich, 1920-21, 9 vols.

Weigand, Wilhelm, Das Elend der Kritik, Munich, 1895.

_____ Florian Geyer, Leipzig and Berlin, 1901.

_____ Der Vater, Munich, 1894.

Wildenbruch, Ernst von, Die Haubenlerche, Berlin, 1891.

_____ Der neue Herr, Berlin, 1891.

_____ Vater und Söhne, 2nd ed., Berlin, 1888.

Wolff, Eugen, Oskar Blumenthal, Berlin, 1888.

_____ Geschichte der deutschen Literatur in der Gegenwart, Leipzig, 1896.

Wolff, Eugen, Von Shakespeare zu Zola, Berlin, 1902.

_____ Zwölf Jahre im literarischen Kampf, Oldenburg, 1901.

Zola, Emile, Nos auteurs dramatiques, Paris, 1881.

_____ Le roman experimental, Paris, 1923.

Nineteenth Century Literary Periodicals

Allgemeine Theaterzeitung, Vienna, 1822-1848.

Blätter für die literarische Unterhaltung, Leipzig, 1826-1898.

Deutsche Rundschau, Berlin, 1874.

Deutschland, Glogau, 1889-90.

Europa, Chronik der gebildeten Welt, Leipzig, 1835-44; 1846-85.

Freie Bühne für modernes Leben (Die neue Rundschau), Berlin, 1890-.

Die Gegenwart, Berlin, 1872-1930.

Die Gesellschaft, Munich, 1885-1902.

Die Grenzboten, Leipzig, 1841-1922.

Hallische Jahrbücher für deutsche Wissenschaft und Kunst, Leipzig, 1838-42.

Jahrbücher für dramatische Kunst und Literatur, Berlin, 1848-49.

Kritisches Jahrbuch, Hamburg, 1889-90.

Der Kunstwart, Munich, 1887-1932.

Das Magazin für die Literatur des In - und Auslandes, Berlin, 1832-1915.

Unterhaltungen am häuslichen Herd, Leipzig, 1853-64.

Zeitung für die elegante Welt, Leipzig, 1801-1857.

Die Zukunft, Berlin, 1892-1922.

## Secondary

Alexander, Neville, Studien zum Stilwandel im dramatischen Werk Gerhart Hauptmanns, Stuttgart, 1964.

Arnold, Robert F., ed. Das deutsche Drama, Munich, 1925.

Arntzen, Helmut, Die ernste Komödie, Munich, 1968.

Auerbach, Erich, Mimesis. Dargestellte Wirklichkeit in der abendländischen Literatur, Bern, 1946.

Augustine, The City of God, tr. J. Healey, London, 1945, 2 vols., [illegible].

Bartels, Adolf, Gerhart Hauptmann, 2nd ed., Berlin, 1906.

Berthold, Siegwart, Der sogenannte „Konsequente Naturalismus" von Arno Holz und Johannes Schlaf, Bonn, 1967.

Bethel, S. L., Shakespeare and the popular dramatic Tradition, London, 1944.

Bettelheim, Anton, Ludwig Anzengruber, Dresden, 1891.

Blume, B., Das nihilistische Weltbild Arthur Schnitzlers, Stuttgart, 1936.

Böckmann, Paul, Der Naturalismus Gerhart Hauptmanns, in: Gestaltprobleme der Dichtkunst. Günther Müller Festschrift, Bonn, 1957, pp.239-258.

Brandt, P. A., Das deutsche Drama am Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts im Spiegel der Kritik, Diss. Leipzig, 1932.

Brill, S., Die Komödie der Sprache. Untersuchungen zum Werk Johann Nestroys, Diss. Frankfurt/M., 1964.

Brinkmann, Richard, Wirklichkeit und Illusion, Tübingen, 1957.

Cowen, Roy, Der Naturalismus. Kommentar zu einer Epoche, Munich, 1973.

David, Claude, Zwischen Romantik und Symbolismus 1820-1885, Gütersloh, 1966.

Demetz, Peter, Marx, Engels und die Dichter, Stuttgart, 1959.

Demler, Leopold, Arno Holz, Vienna, 1938.

Denkler, Horst, Restauration und Revolution. Politische Tendenzen im deutschen Drama zwischen Wiener Kongress und Märzrevolution, Munich, 1973.

Dietrich, Margret, Europäische Dramaturgie; die Wandel ihres Menschenbildes von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart, Vienna, 1952.

Dietrich, Margret, Europäische Dramaturgie im 19. Jahrhundert, Graz and Cologne, 1961.

Dietze, Walter, Erbe und Gegenwart, Berlin, 1972.

_____ Junges Deutschland und deutsche Klassik, 3rd ed., Berlin, 1962.

Dosenheimer, Elise, Das soziale Drama von Lessing bis Sternheim, Konstanz, 1949.

Emrich, Wilhelm, Der Tragödientypus Gerhart Hauptmanns, in: Protest und Verheissung, Frankfurt/M., 1960, pp.193-205.

Fechter, Paul, Das europäische Drama, Mannheim, 1956-58, 3 vols.

Fischer, S., Die Aufnahme des naturalistischen Theaters in der deutschen Zeitschriftenpresse, Diss., F. U. Berlin, 1953.

Fischer, Walter, Hebbel. Maria Magdalena, 2nd ed., Frankfurt/M., 1963.

Frank, K., Karl Gutzkows literarisches Werk als Ausdruck seines Zeiterlebnisses, Diss. Kiel, 1951.

Freyhan, Max, Gerhart Hauptmann, Berlin, 1922.

Frye, Northrop, Anatomy of Criticism, London, 1957.

George, D.E.R., Henrik Ibsen in Deutschland, Göttingen, 1968.

Guthke, Karl S., Gerhart Hauptmann : Welbild im Werk, Göttingen, 1961.

_____ Geschichte und Poetik der deutschen Tragikomödie, Göttingen, 1961.

_____ Die Mythologie der entgötterten Welt, Göttingen, 1971.

Hamann, Richard and Hermand, Jost, Naturalismus. Epochen deutscher Kultur von 1870 bis zur Gegenwart, vol. 11, 2nd ed., Berlin, 1969.

Hampshire, Stuart, Modern Writers and other Studies, London, 1969.

Hermand, Jost, Von Mainz nach Weimar (1793-1919), Stuttgart, 1969.

Hes, E., Charlotte Birch-Pfeiffer als Dramatikerin, Breslau, 1914.

Heuser, F.J.W., Gerhart Hauptmann, Tübingen, 1961.

Hoefert, Sigfrid, The Work of Max Halbe with special Reference to Naturalism, Diss., Toronto, 1962.

Kayser, Wolfgang, Zur Dramaturgie des naturalistischen Schauspiels, in: Die Vortragsreise, Bern, 1958, pp.214-229.

Kindermann, Heinz, Das Burgtheater, Vienna, Leipzig, 1939.

Kleinberg, Alfred, Ludwig Anzengruber. Ein Lebensbild, Stuttgart and Berlin, 1921.

Klotz, Volker, Offene und geschlossene Form im Drama, 3rd ed. Frankfurt/M., 1968.

Kniffler, C., Die „sozialen" Dramen der achtziger und neunziger Jahre des 19. Jahrhunderts, Diss. Frankfurt/M., 1929.

Knilli, Friedrich and Münchow, Ursula, eds., Frühes deutsches Arbeitertheater, 1847-1918, Munich, 1970.

Koch, Friedrich, Idee und Wirklichkeit, Düsseldorf, 1956, 2 vols.

Koessler, L., Louis Anzengruber; auteur dramatique, Diss. Strassbourg, 1943.

Koopmann, Ludwig, Das junge Deutschland; Analyse seines Selbstverständnisses, Stuttgart, 1970.

Koplowitz, O., Otto Brahm als Theaterkritiker, Zurich and Leipzig, 1936.

Krook, Dorothea, Elements of Tragedy, New Haven, 1969.

_____ The Ordeal of Consciousness in the Work of Henry James, London, 1962.

Kuh, Emil, Biographie Friedrich Hebbels, 3rd ed., Vienna, 1912, 2 vols.

Langner, Erwin, Die Religion Gerhart Hauptmanns, Tübingen, 1928.

Lukacs, Georg, Deutsche Realisten des 19. Jahrhunderts, Berlin, 1952.

_____ Fortschritt und Reaktion in der deutschen Literatur, Berlin, 1947.

MacFarlane, James W., Hauptmann, Ibsen and the Concept of Naturalism, in: Hauptmann Centenary Lectures, ed. K. G. Knight and F. Norman, London, 1964, pp.31-64.

McInnes, Edward, Drama as Protest and Prophecy. The historical Drama of the Jungdeutschen, in: Maske und Kothurn, 1971, pp.190-202.

_____ Lessing's 'Hamburgische Dramaturgie' and the Theory of the Drama in the 19th Century, in: Orbis Litterarum, 1973, pp.293-318.

_____ The Sturm und Drang and the Development of social Drama, in: Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte, 1972, pp.61-81.

Mann, Otto, Poetik der Tragödie, Bern, 1958.

Manns, B., Das Proletariat und die Arbeiterfrage im deutschen Drama, Diss. Rostock, 1913.

Markwardt, Bruno, Geschichte der deutschen Poetik, vols. IV and V, Berlin, 1959-67.

Martersteig, Max, Das deutsche Theater im neunzehnten Jahrhundert, 2nd ed., Leipzig, 1924.

Martin, W., Der kämpferische Atheismus Ludwig Anzengrubers, Diss. Berlin (East), 1960.

Martini, Fritz, Deutsche Literatur im bürgerlichen Realismus, 2nd ed., Stuttgart, 1964.

_____ Soziale Thematik und Formwandlungen des Dramas, in: Der Deutschunterricht, 1953, pp.73-100.

_____ Das Wagnis der Sprache, Stuttgart, 1954.

May, Kurt, 'Maria Magdalene' im Zusammenhang der jüngsten Hebbelforschung, in: Dichtung und Volkstum, 1943, pp.32-61.

Mehring, Franz, Zur Literaturgeschichte von Hebbel bis Gorki Berlin, 1929.

_____ Gesammelte Schriften, Berlin, 1960-63, 12 vols.

Metis, Eduard, Karl Gutzkow als Dramatiker, Breslau, 1915.

Meyer, Richard M., Die deutsche Literatur des 19 . Jahrhunderts, Berlin, 1900.

Miller, Arthur, Collected Plays, New York, 1957.

Mortier, Roland, Diderot in Deutschland 1750-1850, Stuttgart, 1972.

Müller, J., Zur motivischen und dramaturgischen Struktur von Hebbels ‚Maria Magdalena', in: Hebbel Jahrbuch, ed. L. Koopmann, Heide in Holstein, 1968, pp.45-76.

Münchow, Ursula, Deutscher Naturalismus, Berlin, 1968.

Nagl, Johann and Zeidler, Jakob, Deutsch-österreichische Literaturgeschichte, Vienna, 1899-1937, 4 vols.

Northam, John, Ibsen, Cambridge, 1973.

_____ Ibsen's Search for the Hero, in: Ibsen, ed. R. Fjelde, New York, 1965, pp.91-108.

Osborne, John, The Naturalist Drama in Germany, Manchester, 1971.

Pascal, Roy, From Naturalism to Expressionism: German Literature and Society 1890-1918, London, 1973.

Praschek, Helmut, Das Verhältnis von Kunsttheorie und Kunstschaffen im Bereich der deutschen naturalistischen Dramatik, Diss. Greifswald, 1957.

Purdie, Edna, Friedrich Hebbel, London, 1932.

Ridler, Ann, ed., Shakespeare Criticism 1935-1960, London, 1963.

Ritchie, J. M., The ambivalence of "Realism" in German Literature 1830-1880, in: Orbis Litterarum, 1961, pp.200-217.

Röhr, Julius, Gerhart Hauptmanns dramatisches Schaffen, Berlin, 1912.

Rommel Otto, Die Alt-Wiener Volkskomödie, Vienna, 1952.

Root, Winthrop H., German Criticism of Zola, New York, 1931.

Ruprecht, Erich, Literarische Manifeste des Naturalismus, 1880-1892, Stuttgart, 1962.

Schatzky, Brigitte, Otto Ludwig's 'Der Erbförster' as a bürgerliches Trauerspiel, in: German Life and Letters, 1952, pp.267-274.

Schrimpf, H. J., 'Rose Bernd', in: Das deutsche Drama, ed. Benno von Wiese, Wiesbaden, 1958, II, pp.166-85.

_____ Struktur und Metaphysik des sozialen Schauspiels bei Gerhart Hauptmann, in: Literatur und Gesellschaft vom 19 ten ins 20 ste Jahrhundert. Festgabe für Benno von Wiese, Bonn, 1963, pp.274-308.

Schulz, G., Naturalism, in: Periods in German Literature, 1, ed. J. M. Ritchie, London, 1966, pp.199-225.

Seidlin, Oskar, Otto Brahm, in: German Quarterly, 1963, pp.131-140.

Sengle, Friedrich, Biedermeierzeit. Deutsche Literatur im Spannungsfeld zwischen Restauration und Revolution 1815-1848, Stuttgart, 1971-72, 2 vols.

_____ Das historische Drama in Deutschland, 2nd ed., Stuttgart, 1969.

Shaw, Leroy R., Witness of Deceit: Gerhart Hauptmann as Critic of Society, Berkeley, 1958.

Shepherd, W. A., Social Conscience and Messianic Vision. A study in the problems of Gerhart Hauptmann's individualism, Diss., Edinburgh, 1962.

Sievers, H., 'Maria Magdalena' auf der Bühne, Berlin and Leipzig, 1933.

Sinden, Margaret, Gerhart Hauptmann. The Prose Plays, Toronto, & London 1957.

Soergel, Albert, Dichtung und Dichter der Zeit, 1, Leipzig, 1911.

Steinecke, Hartmut ed., Theorie und Technik des Romans im 19. Jahrhundert, Tübingen, 1970.

Steiner, George, The Death of Tragedy, London, 1962.

Stern, M., Das zentrale Symbol in Hebbels ‚Maria Magdalena', in: Hebbel in neuer Sicht, ed. H. Kreuzer, Stuttgart, 1963, pp.228-246.

Stern, J. P., Re-Interpretations. Seven studies in nineteenth century German literature, London, 1964.

Swales, Martin, Arthur Schnitzler, Oxford, 1971.

Szondi, Peter, Theorie des modernen Dramas, Frankfurt/M., 1959.

Tibal, A., Hebbel, sa vie et ses oeuvres. De 1813 à 1845, Paris, 1911.

Turner, David, 'Die Familie Selicke' and the drama of Naturalism, in: Periods in German Literature, 11, ed. J. M. Ritchie, London, 1969, pp.193-219.

Voigt, Felix A., Hauptmann Studien, Breslau, 1936.

Wagner, A. M., Das Drama Friedrich Hebbels, Hamburg and Leipzig, 1911.

Wahl, Margareta, Das deutsche Bauerndrama seit Anzengruber, Diss. Heidelberg, 1934.

Walzel, Oskar, Vom Geistesleben alter und neuer Zeit, Leipzig, 1922.

Weder, H., Die Stimmungskunst in Max Halbes Gegenwartsdramen, Diss. Halle, 1932.

von Wiese, Benno, Die deutsche Tragödie von Lessing bis Hebbel, 3rd ed., Hamburg, 1955.

Williams, Raymond, Modern Tragedy, London, 1966.

Wulffen, E., Gerhart Hauptmann. Kriminalpsychologische und pathologische Studien, Berlin, 1911.

Zander, Rosmarie, Der junge Gerhart Hauptmann und Henrik Ibsen, Limburg, 1947.

Zentner, Wilhelm, Studien zur Dramaturgie Eduard von Bauernfelds, Leipzig, 1922.

Ziegler, Klaus, Mensch und Welt in der Tragödie Friedrich Hebbels, 2nd ed., Darmstadt, 1966.

_____ Schiller und das Drama, in: Wirkendes Wort, 1954-55, pp.205-215.

_____ Zur Raum und Bühnegestaltung des klassischen Dramentypus, in: Wirkendes Wort, 1954, pp.45-54.